



# THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION  
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 67.

Price. Five Cents.

## BUFFALO BILL'S BEST BOWER

OR  
CALLING THE TURN ON DEATH NOTCH DICK



BY  
THE AUTHOR  
OF 'BUFFALO BILL'

"UP WITH THAT LEFT HAND OF YOURS, QUICK, DEATH NOTCH DICK, OR MY BULLET HUNTS YOUR HEART!" CRIED BUFFALO BILL.





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## BUFFALO BILL'S BEST BOWER;

OR,

### Calling the Turn 'on Death Notch Dick.

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By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### A BOY OF THE BORDER.

It was a strange place in which to see a youth of sixteen, upon the wilds of the frontier, afoot and alone, with no habitation, camp, or human being upon whom to call for help within many a long day's tramp.

And yet the youth thus alone was tramping along at a steady pace, carrying a heavy pack upon his back, a rifle thrown across one shoulder and a belt of arms about his waist, while his face showed no anxiety at his position and his look was one to do or dare.

A handsome, sunbronzed face was his—fearless, full of indomitable pluck and will, and he possessed a well-knit, wiry, athletic form to stand hardship and suffering to an unlimited extent.

Behind him stretched boundless plains, here and there broken by a rise of woodland, cut by a stream

or dotted with a bunch of timber, while before him rose a mountain range sloping to foothills and seamed with cañons, and upon all resting a look of intense solitude.

But the youth trudged on steadily, as though anxious to reach the foothills, where a stream was visible, before darkness should add to the desolation of the scene.

At last he drew near to this water course at a point where the bank was heavily fringed with timber, and he said, aloud:

"A dandy place for a camp, with grass in plenty.

"What a pity the redskins killed my pony, for he would have had a feast here—ah! some one is in the timber, for I see a horse feeding there, and he is saddled and bridled.

"I must go slow, for I am likely to run upon road agents about here just as dangerous as hostile redskins."



He lay down upon the ground as he spoke, sheltering himself behind a rock, and taking a field glass that swung at his belt, he turned it upon the timber.

"It is a horse with military saddle and bridle, and he is not staked out.

"I can see no rider, and no other animal, so I guess I will go and see what turns up, for if there be but one it is only man against boy, and I've had that combination before and not been downed."

With this, he went on, yet cautiously, his rifle now thrown across his arm, ready for use on the instant if it was needed.

Reaching the edge of the timber, the horse looked up at him and gave a low neigh of pleasure.

"I do believe he is alone.

"Why, he is coming to meet me!"

The animal came forward for some distance, then turned slowly and walked away toward the river, as though to avoid being taken.

The boy followed, talking to the horse soothingly, until suddenly he stopped and threw his rifle forward.

He saw a man not far from him, seated upon the bank of the stream and leaning back against a tree, while in one hand he held a revolver.

The man was a soldier, for he wore the uniform of a sergeant of cavalry, and his eyes were fixed upon the youth with a strange look.

The horse had halted by the side of the soldier, and was rubbing his nose against his shoulder.

"Say, pard, you don't mean shoot, do you, for I'm only a boy?" called out the youth.

"Come here—I am dying—I thought you were my foe; my eyes are so dimmed now I can hardly see."

The man spoke in a low, weak voice, and the youth quickly strode up to him, threw down his rifle and pack, and exclaimed:

"You do look in a bad way, pard; but maybe I can help you."

"You can help me by your presence; you can do me a favor Heaven will reward you for."

"I'll do anything I can for you; but you are wounded."

"Yest, the work of an assassin—of one I deemed my friend. He learned my secret and sought to kill me. He shot me in the back—here is the wound—and when I heard you coming I thought he was come to finish his work, for he is on my trail, I know. My noble dumb friend, my horse, led you to me, and, thank God! I have strength yet left to talk to you,

though I cannot last much longer. He shot me in the back, then my horse ran off with me, and I came this far, but could go no further, so waited here to face him and death.

"He had to go to his camp for his horse, in order to follow me; but he will soon be here, and——"

"And he will have me to deal with!" was the quick response of the plucky boy.

The youth had seen a horseman coming through the timber, his body bent, and eyes cast downward, following a trail.

In an instant he had seized his pack and sprang behind the large tree against which the soldier was leaning.

On came the horseman, and a closer look revealed a heavily-bearded, long-haired man of large stature, well mounted and armed, and dressed in a combination suit of half buckskin, half miner, while he wore a large slouch hat that cast a shadow upon his by no means prepossessing face.

He spied the wounded soldier and called out, rudely:

"Hands up, sergeant, or I lets drive a ounce o' lead inter yer carkis."

"I am dying, Brad Dixon, and am unable to raise my hands, so do your worst."

"Is that so? Waal, I know'd I had plugged yer, but wasn't so sure it was as bad as that. I'd kill yer now, only I wants a leetle talk with yer," and the man dismounted, but held his revolver cocked and half at a cover of the wounded soldier.

"You wish me to tell you where the gold is that I had already taken out of the mine and hidden away, for you are too lazy to work for more."

"That's about it, sergeant. The mine is a playin' out, but you has been workin' it on ther sly for some time, I knows, afore you got me ter help yer, and I is aware that what you has corraled out of it yer has hid away."

"I have, and you shall never know its hiding-place, for what I found goes as an inheritance to those I love. You saved me from being killed once in an Indian fight, when I believed you were an honest man, and a scout at the fort, and so I sought to repay that service by giving you a share of the mine with me. You repaid me, when I took you to the mine, by trying to kill me the very next time I came to see you at work, but you shall never profit by your cowardly act."



"Won't I, and why?"

"I have one to protect me from your cowardly hand, thank Heaven!"

The man laughed rudely at this, and yet glanced quickly about him, as though suspicious that there might be some one near.

But, seeing no one about, he continued:

"Waal, I'll give them yer love half what ther mine pans out, ef ye'll tell me whar yer has hid thet which yer dug out."

"Never! I would not believe you, Brad Dixon, and now wish that I had been warned when Buffalo Bill told me not to trust you."

"So Buffalo Bill told yer that, did he? Waal, I'll git a rope ter fit his neck some day, for there is men hot on his trail, for he's too dangerous a man to let live. Come, I hain't got no time ter lose, so tell me whar ther gold is, or durn me ef I don't scalp yer alive. Does yer hear me talk?"

The sergeant was breathing heavily, his hands lay limp upon each side of him, unable to clasp the revolvers near them.

His face was deathly pale and it was evident that he suffered intensely and was dying, for the red stream of life was slowly ebbing at every hard-drawn breath from the wound in his back, given him by the treacherous ruffian, Brad Dixon.

As the latter spoke, he seemed to feel that his victim could make no effort to protect himself, so he replaced his revolver in his belt and in its place drew a long-bladed, ugly-looking knife, as though to carry out his threat to scalp the soldier alive.

He stood some half-dozen paces away from him, and, as he made his first step, out from behind the tree suddenly sprang the youth, his revolver leveled, and his words clear and threatening:

"Hands up, old man!"

A bitter oath broke from the lips of the man, and, dropping his knife on the ground, he quickly clutched at his revolver.

Seeing his intention, the youth at once pulled trigger, and the right arm of the man was shattered.

"Now, up with that other hand!" cried the youth.

But the man was game, and he instantly seized a revolver with his left.

Again the youth pulled trigger, and the man staggered back, evidently hit hard.

But he threw his revolver to a level and fired.

The bullet cut through the youth's hat, and he

again pulled trigger, this shot bringing his foe to his knees, yet not disabling him so that he could not fire again.

This bullet tore along the side of the youth, gashing the flesh slightly, but not hurt badly, or demoralized, he once more fired, and with an aim that was deadly, for his bullet pierced the brain of Brad Dixon, who sank forward upon his face, while the sergeant said, faintly:

"That settles him, my brave lad!"

Revolver in hand, the youth advanced toward the fallen man, and, bending over, touched him on the shoulder.

"He is dead," said the sergeant.

"I shot to cripple him at first, but the last time aimed to kill," said the youth, and he turned the body over and beheld the mark of his bullet in his forehead.

"Yes, he is dead; but I have seen so many Indians and white men play 'possum I wanted to be sure. Now, sir, let me help you."

"Nothing can save me now, my brave lad, and what time is left to me, I must make use of, for I have much to say to you; but are you wounded?"

"One shot passed through my hat here, sir, and another grazed me a little on the side; but it is nothing to cry over," and, opening his shirt, the youth saw where the bullet had torn along, just drawing blood and leaving its track.

"You are fortunate, and were brave to face him as you did, when you could have killed him from ambush.

"You have an iron nerve, and I never saw a finer duel, and you were as cool as an icicle."

"It was no time to get excited, sir. I did not wish to kill him, richly as he deserved it, but he forced me to do so; but you are suffering, sir."

"Yes, these spasms of pain are becoming more frequent and severe, so I must talk now while I can, for I have something to tell you of importance.

"Sit here."

The youth first handed him his canteen of cool water from the stream, then made his position more comfortable, and took a seat by his side.

The sergeant gazed into his handsome, fearless face, and asked:

"Who are you, my lad?"

"My name is Sherman Canfield, sir, and I am a border boy."



"Your looks and actions prove that; but are you alone here upon the frontier?"

"Yes, sir; I came out with a party of gold hunters, leaving a happy home in search of adventure and fortune as many boys often foolishly do, and I am now on my way to seek help for the few of the party who remain, for bad luck has dogged us, we have found no gold, the Indians have killed half of our number, and others are lying wounded in camp.

"I volunteered to go for help, and the Indians killed my pony; but I escaped and have tramped it for the past few days. We have been out here for nearly two years, going from mining camp to mining camp, getting into trouble and fighting redskins. That is all there is to my life thus far, sir."

The sergeant smiled, in spite of his suffering, and replied:

"All! But what an all it is, what a lifetime you have passed through already! But now to my story, for I feel that I am growing weaker."

"Yes, sir. I only wish I could help you."

"My name is Frank Fessenden, I am orderly sergeant of F troop of cavalry, stationed at Fort Rattle, some forty miles from here. I came West as a gold hunter, failed to find gold and enlisted in the army. One month after, on an Indian trail, I was scouting alone and struck it rich, finding gold; but I kept my secret, and, being a good frontiersman, would obtain leave for a couple of days, and go and work my mine. Thus I laid up a pretty little fortune, with plenty more gold to find near by, when I had time to work it, after my term of enlistment ran out. I at last decided to take that man as my comrade, for he saved my life at the risk of his own.

"He was a good scout at the fort, but Buffalo Bill dismissed him and warned me against him."

"I have heard of Buffalo Bill."

"Yes; he is a splendid fellow, the chief of scouts at Fort Rattle, and the king of all bordermen."

"Believing I could trust the man, Brad Dixon, I took him to my mine and set him to work. When I went there this morning he had done but little, and, determined to have all, he fired upon me, giving me my death wound. You have avenged me, and it will be for you, my brave youth, to hear my dying words, and to fulfill the last wishes of a dying man, for I feel that you will do so."

"I will do all in my power, sir."

"I know that, and I would trust your face, even

did I not meet you under the circumstances I now do. Though a soldier in the ranks, I am a man, but no education, and was once rich.

"I married the one woman of my love, and she and our little daughter, Leilah, are now in a little village in Maryland, where my wife owns her little home and is teaching school, hoping for me to one day return to them, a rich man. To you I bequeath the duty of letting those I love know how I died, and that, though I could not come back to them with my riches, they shall at least receive the fortune I have found in these wilds, and which has cost me my life at the hands of one whom I trusted."

## CHAPTER II.

### HELD UP.

The voice of the sergeant quivered as he spoke of his wife and child, but he quickly controlled his emotion and resumed:

"Do you know where Fort Rattle is, my lad?"

"No, sir; but I know about the direction to take and can find it. It was there I was going for help for my pards."

"Well, my horse will guide you there, once you start him upon the trail, crossing the stream at the ford above, a quarter of a mile from here. It is about fifty miles, but Rex has often traveled the trail night and day, and his good sense will tell him you wish to go to the fort.

"The mine is a dozen miles from here, in a cañon in yonder mountains. Do you see yonder peaks?"

"Yes, sir."

"The cañon is at its base; but you will find a map in my pocket of just how to reach there, and full instructions, while the gold I laid away, and which Brad Dixon wished to find, I have described on the map just how to get possession of.

"To you, my noble friend, I leave a half share in my mine, and in the gold I have already hidden away."

"Oh, no, sir! I would not think of such a thing as taking it."

"If you refuse, I shall die feeling that I have done a great wrong. By your own confession, you came here as a gold hunter, and have been unsuccessful. You have thrown two years of your life away, and now have risked yourself to save me. You have avenged me by killing that man, and I depend upon



you alone to give my heritage to my wife and child. But you must accept your share, for through you they get or lose all.

"Do not hesitate, for every word I speak is an effort, and I must hasten on to tell you more. Will you accept the charge, my dying legacy?"

One glance into the earnest, white face and Sherman Canfield felt that it was dangerous to delay, so said:

"I will do as you wish, sir, but I have no right to your gold."

"You have, for you have saved it all from that traitor for those I love.

"My name and the address of my wife you will find with the map of how to get to the mine, and as soon as you reach Fort Rattle, I wish you to write to Mrs. Fessenden, telling her of my sad fate, and that my legacy to her you will see that she and my daughter, Leilah, get their share of. Say that you are to be the miner to work for the gold, and share alike with them. I wish you to write, now, for I have paper and a stylographic pen with me, just as I dictate and I will force myself to have strength to sign it."

The youth took, at the sergeant's direction, paper and pen from his pocket, and wrote as he dictated, which was, in effect, that he left to him, Sherman Canfield, the boy miner, a half share in the gold mine he owned, and that he, the youth, was to be his executor, carrying out his wishes in full.

With a great effort the sergeant roused himself to sign the paper, yet did so in a firm hand at last.

Then he fell back, and Sherman Canfield felt that he would never rally.

He bathed his face and forced some water into his mouth to at least see him open his eyes and smile faintly.

"It was, I feared, all over; but I signed it," he said, in a whisper.

"You are better now, sir."

"Yes; but I cannot last much longer. I wish you to go to Colonel Carr, at the fort, and tell him just how I died. Tell Buffalo Bill, also, for he has been a true friend of mine, and you will find him just the one to befriend you, and out here you will need his aid. To Buffalo Bill tell my secret of the mine, but to no one else.

"When you have taken a relief party to your comrades, ask Buffalo Bill to go with you to my mine, showing him the map, and he will readily find it. If

you feel that you can trust your comrades, hire them to work the mine with you, but be sure that you get no one who will be the traitor that Brad Dixon was.

"My belongings send to my wife, along with the gold which is her share, which you can express through by the Overland coach that leaves Fort Rattle every two weeks. Now, my young friend, you know all, and just what I wish, and I feel that you will do your duty by a dying man and those he loves, and who depend upon you."

"If I fail to do my duty by you, sir, and those dear to you, may nothing but ill-fortune and sorrow dog me through life—yes, I solemnly vow by all I hold sacred to be true to you, to yours and your trust in me. So help me Heaven!" and Sherman Canfield clasped the sergeant's hand firmly, while he raised his own upward in token of his vow.

When he looked again into the sergeant's face there was a smile there—a smile stamped with the seal of death!

It was a most trying situation for Sherman Canfield, a youth of sixteen, alone there in the presence of death, and with night gathering about him and fifty miles to the nearest human being or habitation as far as he knew.

He bent his head in reverence as he saw that the sergeant was dead, and his eyes were dimmed with tears.

Then he took his knife and cut a lock of hair from the temple, and folded it away in the paper he had written for the soldier miner to sign.

"They will be glad to get it," he muttered.

Gently he folded the hands over the broad breast, after he had taken from the pockets the leather wallet containing the map and some private papers, along with his purse, watch and chain and seal ring.

Wrapping the body in a blanket, taken from his own pack, he was going to catch the sergeant's horse, when he glanced down at the dead form of the man he had killed.

He passed on, halted, hesitated, and then, turning back, as his better nature triumphed, bent over and clasped the hands across the breast, and, taking his other much-worn blanket, wrapped the body in it, muttering to himself:

"He is dead and I must treat him with the reverence that death demands."

Then he caught the sergeant's horse without diffi-



culty, unsaddled him, and staked him out to feed near by.

Going after the horse of the other, he soon had him secure and also staked him out.

The haversack of provisions hanging to the sergeant's saddle Sherman Canfield was delighted to get, for his own food was running very low, and he had been on short rations since he had started for help.

Spreading the sergeant's blankets for a bed, he then built a fire and ate his supper, just as darkness came on, casting gloomy shadows all about him.

Having finished the meal, he sought a spot near for the sergeant's last resting-place, and was glad to find that the soldier had a small pick tied to his saddle, for he was constantly prospecting when on his lonely rides.

It took him some time to dig the two graves, and he put them wide apart, and it was after midnight when, very tired from his hard work, he turned into his blankets and sank to sleep.

The sun, piercing the foliage, shone into his face in the morning and awoke him.

At first it seemed hard to collect his ideas, but the saddles near him, the horses and the graves recalled the scenes of the day and night before, and he sprang to his feet.

The sergeant's watch told him that it was eight o'clock, so he hastily had breakfast, a cup of coffee from the little pot tasting delicious to him, as did also the broiled bacon, roast potatoes and crackers.

Having gathered his traps together and saddled his horses, he was prepared to start on his way when he turned, took a few leaves from the tree over the sergeant's grave, and, taking up the long stirrups to suit his reach, he mounted and rode away from the scene, his left side feeling a little sore from the scraping of the bullet along it.

He remembered the sergeant's directions, so rode up to the ford, the other horse in lead, and, crossing, allowed Rex, as the animal had been called, to take his way.

The horse at once set off upon a trail up the stream, going along in a way that showed he was not at fault, and Sherman Canfield felt that he was all right now to find Fort Rattle, and would soon get relief for his fellow gold hunters, who were depending upon him to save them from death.

He knew, as he had said, the direction in which

Fort Rattle lay from his camp, where he had left his comrades, some of them wounded, several ill, and a number of them in distress, but the Indians had driven him off the trail he had set out upon, and, killing his pony, he had then to depend wholly upon his own power of endurance on foot.

He did not intend to go up into the mountain range, or to cross it, but to follow along among the foothills until he could see the fort, which, he had been told by one of his companions who knew, was situated upon two sides, it being upon a peninsula of land formed by the rivers, and could be seen for many miles around.

Sherman Canfield was, therefore, glad to see that Rex was going just as he would have gone if alone and he felt no doubt but that the faithful animal would take him to the fort by night, or soon after dark.

He was congratulating himself upon having met the sergeant, of the chance to ride instead of walk, to send to his comrades before long a relief party, and to meet the great scout Buffalo Bill, of whom he had heard so many stories told around the campfires when Rex suddenly pricked up his ears, as he was passing through a cañon, and came to a sudden halt as loud and threatening came the command:

"Halt thar, and hands up, or die!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE GOLD HUNTERS.

Sherman Canfield, as has been said, was but a boy in years, having not yet reached his seventeenth birthday; but he had been reared amid scenes that made men of boys, and from his earliest days had been accustomed to live in an atmosphere where a man's life was held cheap.

With a pleasant home and kindred, he had grown up amid refined surroundings, and at school had been a hard student, and held an ambition to make something of himself in the world.

It was with a desire to look after himself, to go out upon the world as his own master and by his own exertions to make a fortune, that he had left school at fifteen with a fairly good education, and, with a comrade of his own age, joined a band of gold hunters going to the far frontier.

There were some objections offered to the boys going along, on account of their years, and the party



had started out without them, though regretting that they had to leave them behind.

But Sherman Canfield and Nick Buckley were not of the kind to be thwarted, and quickly made up their minds not to get left.

So they bade the party of gold hunters good-by, and then followed after them by the next stage.

When they arrived at the stage station where the party was fitted out with horses, tools and provisions, the two boys kept hidden until they started upon the trail.

Then they appeared, purchased ponies and an outfit with the money they had saved up, and took the trail of the gold hunters just six hours behind them.

They camped the first night alone, and the next day pushed on to overtake them, which they did late in the afternoon, to the great astonishment of the band of thirteen men.

"Say you are glad we have come, for you were just thirteen, and that is an unlucky number," said Sherman, as the men stood regarding them.

"Well, Sherman, I guess you and Nick will have to go with us, for you certainly deserve to do so, after the way you have tracked us," said the captain of the gold hunters.

The boys gave a cheer of delight, and were at once enrolled as gold hunters.

The mountains were reached at last, and the party set to work on the hunt for the yellow metal.

But ill-fortune dogged them. Their captain was killed in a fight in a mining camp, and, in seeking another scene, with the little they had found to reward them, they were held up by road agents, and, showing fight, several of their number were ruthlessly shot down, Sherman Canfield's pard, Nick, being fatally wounded.

With his hand clasped in that of his boy pard, Nick Buckley had died, his last words being uttered in a low tone:

"Some day, you will avenge me, Sherman."

They buried poor Nick and the others where they had fallen, and, robbed of their all by the road agents, they were compelled to press on on foot, for their horses and provisions had been also taken.

After untold hardships they reached another mining camp, and here worked hard for half a year, making only enough to get horses and another outfit for themselves with which to seek a better paying lead.

Thus it continued, ill-luck still dogging them, until

at last the eight who remained decided to return to their homes—all but one.

That one was Sherman Canfield.

He would not give up, would not confess himself beaten, and decided to go back to the stage line with the party and there make a fresh start alone.

It was on their way to the Overland Trail that they got into a brush with a small band of Indians, and two more of their number were killed.

They pushed on, however, until compelled to seek a camping-place on account of the wounded, and then it was that Sherman Canfield, the boy miner, showed his nerve by volunteering to go alone for help to Fort Rattle, which one of the wounded men, who could not go himself, told him how to find.

He set out upon his pony and with his outfit, and the next evening as he was looking for a camp he ran upon a band of Indians.

He fired upon them as they did at him, and wheeled in flight.

But his pony had been wounded, and, after running a couple of miles, staggered and fell.

The brave boy hastily secured his outfit, and darted away in the darkness, thus eluding his pursuers, who were not far behind him.

All through the night, with short halts only for rest, he pushed on, and when the dawn came found that he had thrown his foes completely off his track.

Still keeping the direction of Fort Rattle in his mind, he held on steadily, camped at dark, and the next day felt that he would yet reach the goal, when suddenly he came upon the dying sergeant.

But, though mounted when again pressing on toward the fort, the dangers of the gallant youth were not over, as he discovered when held up in the cañon by unknown foes.

With the frontier experience he had, Sherman Canfield was too wise not to obey the stern command to hold up his hands or die.

His horse had come to a halt, and he quickly raised his hands above his head, gazing with anxious curiosity among the foliage in the cañon to see who it was that had held him up in the border style.

He did not have to wait long, for out of the thicket strode half a dozen men, all with revolvers in hand.

Glancing quickly over his shoulder, he saw that there were as many more behind him, and an escape there was not to be thought of.



A look at the men was sufficient to show that they were a hard-looking lot.

They were roughly attired, some as miners, others as cowboys, and one or two wore old uniforms.

All were armed with rifles and a belt containing a pair of revolvers and a knife.

They had spurs on their top boots, and, though no horses were visible, Sherman Canfield felt sure that they were mounted.

His first thought was that they were road agents, and he looked them over keenly, so to recognize some old foe.

But, whatever his thoughts were, he was not left long in doubt as to their intentions toward him, for one, who appeared to be the leader, said, roughly:

"Well, young man, we've got you in the act, have we?"

"In what act?" was the bold query.

"Horse stealing, as you know."

"I'm no horse thief," and Sherman gave a sigh of relief.

"Hain't yer?"

"No."

"What be yer?"

"A miner."

"Whar from?"

"The lower mines along the range."

"Where did you just come from?"

"My camp."

"Who's with yer?"

"No one."

"Are you camping alone?"

"My comrades, five in number, are back in camp a hundred and more miles from here."

"We ran upon some redskins, and had to camp while I came on for help."

"Where is yer goin'?"

"To Fort Rattle."

"Yer'll never see it."

"Why not?"

"I says so."

"That does not make it so."

"It does."

"I don't see it."

"You'll see it, then, for my word goes."

"Who are you?"

"Cap'n of the vigilantes of Overland City."

"That is a mining camp near Fort Rattle, is it not?"

"It be twenty-five miles from ther fort, in the mountains, and is a mining camp and general settlement."

"Then what have you to do with me?"

"I told yer."

"Tell me again."

"You is a horse thief."

"And you are a liar," came the quick response of the indignant youth.

The men laughed, while the captain's face flushed, and he replied, angrily:

"I won't git mad with a man whose minutes is numbered."

"I don't care whether you get angry or not, for you accuse me of being a horse thief, and I say flatly you lie," was the bold remark of Sherman Canfield.

"You hears him, men?"

"We hear," came in a chorus of voices.

"He's young to be in ther horsestealing biz, but years hain't no sign nowdays of virtue or sin, as It has found out!

"He's a pert-lookin' young one, too; but, for all that, he's a horse thief, and we has the evidence ag'in' him," said the captain.

"We has."

"What evidence?"

"That horse."

He pointed at the animal that had belonged to Brad Dixon.

"That horse belonged to a man who sought to kill me."

"Well?"

"I was quicker than he was, and he got killed."

"You killed Brad Dixon?" cried the captain of the vigilantes, while a murmur of surprise ran among the group.

"Yes, Brad Dixon was his name."

"And you killed him?"

"I was forced to do so, or be killed."

"See here, young feller, every one of us here knowed Brad Dixon well; he were like a brother to us, and he wasn't no man fer a kid ter git away with, onless he got it in ther back, and that's jist how it were done—see?"

"I see that you lie just as well about that as you do about my being a horse thief."

"You is too chipper for one o' your years, and must have yer claws cut."

"What say yer, boys?"



"I guess he'll hev ter hang, cap, for we has ther vidence o' his horse stealin,' and he just boasted o' havin' kilt our pard, Brad Dixon," said one, and it was evident that Sherman Canfield had no friends in that gang of men, for they all asserted that his own words had convicted him of the killing of their pard, while there was the horse as proof that he had stolen him.

The whole time that the vigilantes had been talking to Sherman Canfield, he had been sitting upon the sergeant's horse, holding the other animal by the stake rope, while upon the saddle were packed his own, the soldier's and Brad Dixon's belongings.

The men who now surrounded him were eleven in number, and their faces showed no mercy for the youth.

Across his saddle was Sherman's rifle, and in his belt were revolvers; but what could he do against that band of desperate men?

He was anxious, yet full of nerve, for he showed no sign of fear, and faced them with undaunted look.

After a consultation with his men apart, while one stood guard over the youth, the vigilante captain said:

"Jist tell us how yer come ter murder poor Brad Dixon, and steal his horse, for we don't wish ter be hard on yer?"

"I did not murder your pard or steal his horse."

"How did you git him?"

"I met the man, and he would have killed me had I not have shot him."

"You means ter say that yer killed him squar'?"

"Yes, for he fired two shots at me, while I broke his right arm, then brought him down with another shot, and was then compelled to kill him."

"What were Brad doin' all thet time?"

"Trying to kill me."

"Who fired the first shot?"

After a slight hesitation, Sherman Canfield answered:

"I did."

"I thought so. You shot him afore he seen you?"

"No, I did not."

"When yer kilt him what did yer do?"

"I buried him and came on toward the fort."

"Whar was this?"

"Back on the trail about thirty miles."

Sherman Canfield had not once spoken of the sergeant; he had not wished to do so, and all the time

was fearful it would be noticed that he was mounted upon an army horse and with a military saddle and bridle.

His fears were not unfounded, for the vigilante leader said:

"Whar did yer git that horse yer is ridin'?"

"I'll tell you how I got him, as I suppose I must do so now, for it was for the owner of this horse that I had to kill your pard."

"How were that?"

"I had lost my pony, shot down by Indians, and was tramping, when I came upon a wounded soldier leaning against a tree and dying."

"Dying?"

"Yes, for he is dead."

"Who was he?"

"Sergeant Fessenden, of Fort Rattle."

"We knows him, and he did a heap o' scoutin' alone. But go on."

"He told me that he had been shot in the back by a man who had been a scout at the fort, and whom he believed to be his friend. His horse had run away with him, but the man followed him and came up while I was there, and, as he tried to kill the sergeant, I showed myself, and we had it out. The sergeant died soon after, and I buried both men and am on my way to the fort to report the affair to Colonel Carr."

"You'll never git thar."

"Why?"

"We is vigilantes, I told yer."

"What of that?"

"Waal, you is a tenderfoot not to know what vigilantes be; but I'll tell yer thet it is our place ter run down horse thieves and desperadoes, and hang 'em up, and you is about as hard a nut as we has had ter crack, notwithstanding yer is so young."

"Take me on to the fort, then, and let me tell Colonel Carr my story, or Buffalo Bill."

"You bet we don't take yer nowhar; and, as fer Buffalo Bill, he hain't ther best friend we has."

"I guess he knows you for what you are," was the bold rejoinder.

"See here, none o' yer sarcasm, for prayin' would be more becomin' in yer jist now."

"Do you intend to murder me?"

"We intends ter hang yer as a murderer and a thief."

"You have no right to hang me without a trial."



"You has been already tried; but, see here, did ther sergeant give yer any mission ter carry out for him?" and the man asked the question eagerly.

"He told me to report his death to Colonel Carr, and to send his watch, ring and purse home to his wife."

"You has got 'em?"

"Yes."

"All right, maybe we'll git some good pickin' off your dead body, arter all."

"Come, pards, throw a lariat over him, tie his hands and string him up over yonder limb," and the vigilante captain pointed to a tree near by with a limb that grew low and branched far out.

Quick as a flash a lasso coiled about Sherman Canfield, pinioning his arms to his side, while another fell about his neck, and he was dragged from the saddle, just as a horseman dashed out of the timber, a revolver in each hand.

"Harm that boy and you settle with me!" came the words, while the vigilantes called out in chorus:

"Buffalo Bill!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### BUFFALO BILL TO THE RESCUE.

Almost like an apparition, Buffalo Bill had appeared upon the scene.

He had come through the pine thicket, where the carpet of pine straw had deadened the sound of hoofs, and he had not been seen until he suddenly dashed out before the astonished eyes of the vigilantes, a revolver in each hand, and a look upon his face as though he had no dread of the numbers against him, and defied them all.

There he sat, upright and threatening, in his saddle, horse and man presenting a splendid picture, one that fascinated young Sherman Canfield, as he stood bound and with the lariat about his neck, and upon whom the eyes of all the vigilantes were riveted.

The coming of Buffalo Bill had checked the murderers in their intention to string the youth up to the limb.

They stood dismayed by the interruption of their cruel deed.

Each one waited for their captain to speak.

But he seemed to have lost the power of speech, so Buffalo Bill broke the silence with:

"See here, Dabney Dunn, what does this high handed outrage mean?"

"We was out on the trail of horse thieves, Buffalo Bill, and has caught one—and that means we intend to hang him," was the dogged reply.

"Hang that boy?" sneered the scout.

"He's mean enough to steal horses and git away with our pard, Brad Dixon."

"What do you mean?"

"He's kilt Brad Dixon."

"I'll warrant that, if he did, he was forced to do so to save himself from being robbed or murdered."

"See here, Buffalo Bill, does you accuse our pard of being a robber and a murderer?"

"I speak of a man as I find him, Dunn, and I kicked Dixon out of my band of scouts because he was a thief and a desperado. It is true he was white-washed by a few in the camp of Overland City, and you became his friend, but that was nothing to his favor or to yours, and I repeat that I believe the youth was justified in killing him."

"See here, Chief of Scouts W. F. Cody, you are carrying too high a hand in this country, and you'll have to crawfish, or it will be the worst for you."

"You bet it will," sung out the others, in chorus.

Buffalo Bill's response was a mocking laugh, and he continued, after a minute:

"Come, my young friend, give an account of yourself, and also why you have Sergeant Fessenden's horse there?"

He rode up to the youth as he spoke, took the lasso from about his neck, and the other from around his body.

Sherman Canfield gave a sigh of relief, and then said:

"I'll tell you the story, sir, as I told it to these men who claim to be vigilantes."

"They are, after a fashion, persecuting the innocent very often and taking no heed of the guilty; but the colonel is going to stop their little game."

"And we'll stop yours, Buffalo Bill, for you can't bully us."

The chief of scouts paid no heed to the words, but said:

"Now to your story, my boy."

In a few words Sherman Canfield told the story, as known to the reader, of the misfortunes of the gold hunters, and how he had started for aid and came across the dying sergeant.



All that the sergeant had told him, save to send his effects home, he kept to himself, and just how the duel had been fought between Brad Dixon and himself.

Buffalo Bill listened with deepest attention, and then said:

"You did good work when you turned up the toes of Brad Dixon, my boy, and doubtless saved me from killing him.

"It will cast a gloom over all at the fort to learn of poor Sergeant Fessenden's death, for he was a noble fellow, and the colonel will appreciate your defending him, when dying, from a desperado.

"This trail will take you to the fort, and you can ride the sergeant's horse and take your traps on him, for the horse of Dixon these men will claim, so they can have him."

"You bet we takes him."

"Don't be too sure, Dunn, or I'll leave it for Colonel Carr to decide. I was on my way to Overland City, when I saw from the stage that you and your gang were in some deviltry, so I came down to see what it was."

"I'm awful glad you came, sir, for these men would have hanged me."

"They'll have to stop their vigilante game now, for I have orders from Colonel Carr to put up some placards in Overland City against any more such lawless acts, and stating that he will see to it that crime is properly punished.

"I am on my way there now, and, Dunn, I'll give you one of the placards now, so you will no longer plead ignorance of the colonel's orders," and the scout unrolled a placard and handed it to the vigilante captain.

All the while that Buffalo Bill had been on the scene the vigilantes were becoming more and more uneasy.

They were measuring their strength against his, not as regards numbers, for they could have overwhelmed him; but dare they attack him was the question which was uppermost in their minds.

They had no doubt if it came to a fight that several of their number must go under, but so would Buffalo Bill.

But that would not be the end of it.

He was chief of scouts at Fort Rattle, he had a large band of splendid scouts, guides and Indian fighters under his command, and, then, too, he was

the idol of the army, and a great favorite with Colonel Carr.

His death would be followed by a revenge that would sweep all lawless characters from that part of the frontier at least.

This the vigilantes, self-constituted judges and executioners though they were, dare not risk.

So when Buffalo Bill told Sherman Canfield to go on to the fort, while he went to the settlement to place the placards of Colonel Carr, the vigilante captain said nothing.

The vigilantes were also not so sure that Buffalo Bill was not accompanied by a number of scouts, who were within easy call of his voice.

Under such circumstances the scout's fearless game of bluff awed the vigilantes, while Sherman Canfield looked on in utter amazement.

If he had doubted the stories told of Buffalo Bill around the campfires, there was no longer room for doubt in his mind when he saw him come up and defy a dozen desperate men.

The youth watched Caleb Dunn, when the chief of scouts held the placard out to him, but the vigilante captain refused it, and said:

"I don't take it, Buffalo Bill."

"As you please. 'I'll read it to you,' and he at once began, as follows:

"Whereas, there are certain men banded together on this border, under the name of vigilantes, and in their acts have perpetrated crimes against innocent men, allowing the guilty to escape, I hereby order all such to disband at once, leaving the keeping of law and order and punishment of criminals to the military officers of the United States Government.

"If these so-called vigilantes do not at once disband, and again attempt to assume the right to hunt down and punish the lawless, they will at once be dealt with as outlaws themselves, as per my instructions from the Secretary of War.

"Signed, etc."

The scout paused after reading the placard, and said:

"Dunn, you and your men have heard what the colonel orders. This is mainly aimed at you, and, as I have read it to you, there is no excuse for your saying you do not know the orders, so I warn you to very quickly obey."

"We'll hold a meeting in Overland City first, Buffalo Bill, and see if the miners and settlers decide that the colonel had a right to issue such orders."

"As you please. Now, my lad, take that trail to the fort and report to Colonel Carr upon your arrival. I will be back there by night and see you."



"Thank you, sir!" and Sherman Canfield at once began his preparations for riding on his way on the sergeant's horse, leaving the animal of Brad Dixon behind him.

"I warn you, Dunn, not to follow that boy," said Buffalo Bill, as he watched the youth ride away, and, when he disappeared in the distance, he put spurs to his horse and rode off in the opposite direction.

"Well, I've heard many stories of Buffalo Bill and what he could do; but he certainly is the gamest man I ever saw to tackle, alone, that gang of cutthroats.

"The sergeant told me I would find him a splendid fellow, and he is.

"I owe him my life, for, if he had not come up when he did, I'd have been coyote grub now, that is certain.

"I'll never forget him, never, and if I can ever serve him in any way, I will.

"Those fellows, I believe, belonged to the gang of road agents who killed my poor pard, Nick Buckley, and yet I am not sure.

"I only wish that I was.

"I am in luck that they did not get the sergeant's papers, watch and other things, as I was fearful that they would."

So mused the brave boy as he rode on his way along the trail.

Coming to a stream, Rex plunged boldly in, and, as he stopped to drink, Sherman Canfield saw on the shore ahead several horsemen appear in the trail, and he noticed that they were masked.

Glancing behind him, to his alarm he beheld other horsemen, also masked.

"Well, I'm in for it again, and where is Buffalo Bill?" he said, anxiously.

His look behind him showed that he was hemmed in.

There were three men in his front, three behind him, and all were masked.

Were they the vigilantes or not?

He could not tell for when they had halted they had been on foot, and he now saw that these horsemen wore black gowns to hide their clothing.

He was about half-way across, and where a large rock was in the center of the stream, rising some feet above the water.

At once the boy made up his mind to act, and his thought was for the sergeant's wife and child, not himself.

He had bundled the sergeant's papers, watch, chain and ring away in a package which he had tied up tightly.

Then he had put his revolvers and knife with it, and around all had tied his rubber coat, making a compact and water-tight bundle.

"The weight of the revolvers will sink it, and I'll chance it right by this rock, anchoring it with the sergeant's sword," he muttered.

So he slipped out the bundle, pulled the sword out of the scabbard, thrust it through a leather thong bound about the package, and, leaning over, pushed the point down into the bottom of the stream.

He then took the butt of his rifle and shoved the sword the full length of the blade to the hilt.

Gazing carefully down into the water he could barely see the object, which looked like a small rock, and the water was not very clear.

He took the position of the rock, with objects on both shores, and then twisted about in his saddle, although he was undecided what to do.

He felt confident that the men had not seen him anchor the bundle, and he twisted his horse about as though afraid, which in reality he was.

At last one of the men behind him called out:

"Say, pard, we is tired waiting for you to come ashore, so we'll hurry you with a bullet."

"Never mind; I am coming."

He started to cross as before, but he was hailed again by the men on both shores and told to go back.

"But I'm going to the fort."

"Come back, fer we wants yer."

Sherman hesitated still, when one of the men raised his revolver and a bullet passed unpleasantly near his head.

He at once saw that they were not to be trifled with, so turned and rode back.

"I say, pard, we want you."

"What do you want with me?"

"You'll know later. Say, Slayback, you take him with you soon as we have him foul, and we'll git on and report for safety, see?"

"Yas, I see; but be sure and fix him sartin, for I've a idee he's a young wolf ter handle," said the man called Slayback.

"You bet he be, or his looks belies him," and with this a lariat was thrown over the form of Sherman.



Canfield, and his arms were secured tightly to his sides.

With another lariat he was made fast to his saddle while he asked:

"What do you intend to do with me?"

"That depends."

"Upon what?"

"Upon what yer knows when yer is questioned."

"But put a gag in his mouth, pards, ter stop his music now."

The order was obeyed, and poor Sherman found himself more securely bound and gagged.

Then the men held a short conversation together, and while Slayback rode into the stream leading the horse ridden by the youth, and turned up it close to the shore, the others beckoned to those across the river to join them, and the party rode off back on the trail they had come.

In spite of his great danger, Sherman Canfield was delighted to see that his clever ruse to keep the sergeant's valuable package from being discovered had not been noticed by any of the masked outlaws.

He looked back time and again, as the man Slayback led him on up the stream, the horses keeping nearer the bank they had left, and where the water was shallowest.

But his looks showed that the masked men had not gone out into the stream to see why he had not once come ashore at their command, and, in spite of his gag and the bands which pained him, his breast bounded with triumph at his having outwitted his masked foes.

## CHAPTER V.

### BUFFALO BILL SURPRISED.

Buffalo Bill rode away from the group of vigilantes, after seeing Sherman Canfield depart, although he had not the slightest fear of their proving treacherous.

Not that he did not regard them as capable of being, but after he had seen the youth, told him to ride on to the fort, and warned them, he did not think they would dare follow him to carry out their original intention.

He went at a canter along the trail leading to Overland City, distant some twenty miles.

The "city" was a mining camp in the mountains, combined with a settlement consisting of a dozen

ranches in a large valley, and as many as a score of small farms scattered about in the vicinity.

With the ranches, farms and mining camp the country occupied was quite extensive, while there was a fort in the mountains, and corrals, to which all could retreat for safety, but which was unoccupied save when the Indians were on the warpath.

The settlement of Overland City boasted of a few stores, blacksmith shops, a tavern, church and school, and all was under the protection of Fort Rattle, twenty miles away by the most direct trail.

All told, there were perhaps six hundred souls in the settlement, several thousands of heads of cattle, some sheep and hogs, and a number of horses, so that there was plunder and stock enough to continually tempt the Indians and the road agents, while the fort had to keep a close watch that the settlers should not be surprised.

That the community was the prey to much lawlessness there was no doubt; and life was held very cheap, while horse stealing and cattle thieving, with raids upon the mines by outlaws, was a weekly occurrence.

There were a number of spirits in the camps, men who were more or less idle, who had formed themselves into a band known as the Range Regulators, and they had been most energetic in their self-imposed task of punishing those whom they deemed foes to lawless living.

But there were constant complaints from the better element that these Ranger Regulators were no better than the men they hunted down, being gamblers and bad characters generally.

Having heard such complaints made time and again, Colonel Carr put Buffalo Bill upon the tracks of the Ranger Regulators to shadow their deeds, and the result was a report which led the able commandant at Fort Rattle to decide to break up the band, for, though the chief of scouts had not been able to fasten upon them any direct act of crime, he yet had discovered that they were universally feared, looked upon as desperadoes, and had allowed several of their comrades of like ilk to go unpunished, while they had made innocent men suffer.

So it was that the colonel's placard was written, and Buffalo Bill was sent to put copies up at the cross trails, in the settlement, the mining camp and wherever they would be seen.

He was on this duty when he so opportunely dis-



covered that the Ranger Regulators had a prisoner and were going to cause him to suffer in some way.

Seeing, as he approached, that the prisoner was a youth, he had not counted danger and odds, but had dashed upon the scene and by sheer pluck had won the victory.

Keeping at a rapid canter on toward Overland City, he halted at a place where two trails crossed and stuck up a placard where it would be readily seen.

Another halt for the same purpose was made at the first mining camp, and then at the tavern, saloons and stores in Overland City, a great many of the people congratulating him upon his work when they read what it was, and saying to him:

"We owe this to you, Buffalo Bill."

Having finished his work in the immediate settlement, he turned to pass back through the camp and then go to the fort by another trail from the one he had come, when he met the Ranger Regulators face to face, mounted and riding toward their quarters.

He nodded in an indifferent way as he rode by, counted them and said to himself:

"They are all there, so none of them followed the boy. I did not think they would dare do so."

Urging his horse to a canter, it was an hour after sunset when he arrived at the fort, and, going to headquarters to report to Colonel Carr, to his great surprise he learned that Sherman Canfield had not arrived there.

Fort Rattle was a delightful spot for a military post, situated, as has been said, upon a bluff between two rivers, and sloping back to vast acres of meadowland upon the peninsula, where thousands of horses and cattle were allowed to range at will, a line of cowboy cabins and a stockade wall from stream to stream keeping them in corral, for the banks were too precipitous to cross except near the fort, on either side of which cuts had been made down to fords.

There was a large force there under command of Colonel Carr, a battery of light artillery, a battalion of cavalry and six companies of infantry, with thirty scouts and half as many cowboys to care for the cattle.

In all, Colonel Carr could put four hundred men in the field, and yet have a fair reserve force for the defense of the fort.

The view was fine, the air balmy and pure, and, in

spite of the danger of frontier life, the officers' families found Fort Rattle a most charming spot at which to be stationed.

When Buffalo Bill, upon his return, was admitted to the colonel's quarters, he found that officer enjoying a cigar after supper, and he said quickly:

"I am glad to see you back, Cody, for I was growing anxious about you, and felt that I should have ordered you to take a number of your men with you, as I feared those fellows might get ugly at being deprived of their occupation."

"They said they would call a meeting, sir, and find out what power you had to disband them; but I met them on the way, and, as you doubtless heard from my boy pard, caught them in deviltry."

"Heard from your boy pard, Cody?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who is he?"

"The youth I found a prisoner to the Ranger Regulators, who were about to hang him, and sent on here to report to you, sir."

"I have seen no boy, Cody."

Buffalo Bill's face at once revealed his surprise, and he said:

"Could he have come to the fort, sir, and not report to you?"

"No arrival has been reported to me," and Colonel Carr called for his orderly and sent him at once to the officer of the day to learn if the youth had arrived.

The report quickly came that the youth had not been seen.

"What does this mean, Cody?"

"He might have gone astray from the trail, sir, and got lost, though he did not look like a tenderfoot, and I gave him full directions."

"But he has gone astray, beyond doubt."

"Where did you see him?"

"It was in Coyote Cañon, sir."

"And the Ranger Regulators had him in their keeping?"

"They did, sir."

"Then they have done away with him."

"I hardly think so, sir, as he started from the cañon, leaving me with them, and I warned them not to harm him, while I read your riot act to them, sir."

"You read it to them?"

"I did, sir."



"Just like you, Cody; but they could not misunderstand that."

"They understood it, sir; but when I came back through Overland City I met the band, and counted them, and they had not had time to get away with the boy."

"Then what has become of him?"

"I wish to believe, sir, that he has been lost."

"Who is he?"

"He gave me his name as Sherman Canfield, and he lives in Omaha."

"He came with a boy pard, along with some gold-hunters who have met only misfortune the two years they have been out here, and the remnant of the band, five in number, are now camped in the mountains a hundred miles from here, waiting for the youth to bring them relief."

"He volunteered to come to Fort Rattle for aid, and his story was told in an honest way that no one could doubt."

Then Buffalo Bill went on with the story as he heard it from the lips of Sherman Canfield, and the colonel seemed greatly shocked at the news of Sergeant Fessenden's death, and said:

"Fessenden was dreaming of a commission, Cody, and I have often wondered why he enlisted as a private soldier, for he was a man of refinement and education, a perfect gentleman in his manners and bearing."

"I am deeply pained to hear of his sad end, but he had a most mysterious way of going off on several days' jaunts whenever he could get leave, and I was fearful that he would some day meet with his death."

"I will tell you his secret, Colonel Carr, for I know

"He was, as you said, a man of education, and a thorough geologist, and his jaunts were in search of gold, he told me."

"Did he find any?"

"That I do not know, sir, but I believe that lost boy knows all."

"Cody, that boy must be found," was Colonel Carr's energetic response.

"Yes, sir, dead or alive, he must be found, and if he has been killed he must be avenged," was the reply of the chief of scouts in a deep, earnest voice that showed that he was aroused to rescue or avenge.

"He killed the man Dixon in a duel over the sergeant's body, you say?"

"Yes, sir, and then remained by the sergeant until he died, and of course he had the effects of Fessenden, his papers and all else, though he did not say so, I judge for a reason, as he was talking before those Ranger Regulators."

"Did they really intend to hang him?"

"Beyond all doubt, sir."

"For what reason?"

"They accused him of being a horse thief, as he had Dixon's horse, and then of murdering their comrade."

"Cody, how did the boy get the drop on that desperate fellow Dixon?"

"I only know from what he said, sir, and, seeing him, you will believe him."

"When the sergeant died, he hastened on to the fort?"

"No, sir, for he buried the sergeant, and the body of Dixon as well, he told me, camped for the night, and the next morning let the horse he rode, Fessenden's, show the way to the fort."

"The boy has good stuff in him?"

"He has, indeed, sir."

"Well, what is to be done about him?"

"I will go with a dozen of my men, sir, to the Coyote Cañon and camp until morning, when I will be on the spot to take his trail and see where he went, or if others met him."

"Who else could meet him that would do him harm, Cody?"

"Well, sir, I am always on the watch for road agents about, and he may have run upon a gang of these."

"Very true—the masked Gold Ghouls, as they are pleased to call themselves, and not without reason, as they are a bad lot of murdering, ghoulish robbers."

"I hope some day we can wipe them out, colonel; but they move in a most mysterious way, and it is harder to trail them and run them down than it is to catch Indians."

"I agree with you; but you will start, then, tonight with your men?"

"Yes, sir, so as to be ready to take the boy's trail at dawn, and, now I think of it, sir, as he was riding Sergeant Fessenden's horse, there was no need to leave the trail, as you know I told you he let the animal be his guide?"



"Yes, he is not lost, but some harm has befallen the poor boy."

"I wish you would take some extra couriers along and send me news as you find it to-morrow, Cody."

"I will, sir," and, bidding the colonel good-night, the chief of scouts went to his own quarters and sent for his band of Indian fighters to meet him there.

They soon gathered in his cabin, as fine a lot of men as ever were seen in one group, most of them over six feet, with superb physiques, handsome, resolute, fearless faces, and dead shots, rough riders and splendid lariat throwers every one of them.

Most of them wore their hair long, and they were dressed in buckskin, even to wearing moccasins, and one and all were armed with the best of weapons.

In a few words Buffalo Bill told them of the reason for his calling them together, described the scene with the Ranger Regulators, made known the death of Sergeant Fessenden, and then the killing of Brad Dixon by the brave youth, a description of whom was given the scouts.

The men who were to go with the chief were selected, and then Buffalo Bill said:

"Jack, I wish you to take these men with you, and a couple of pack horses, with a sheet of strong canvas. Go right through to-night to the foothills of Eagle Peak, and you will at dawn, from what the young fellow told me, pick up his trail. Remember, there were two horses, one the sergeant's, Rex, and you can find the graves.

"The sergeant's body you are to bring back in the canvas, so take picks and shovels, and the other grave open to be sure that it is the body of Brad Dixon in it."

"Yes, chief."

"Come back with all haste, and I'll have an ambulance with a coffin meet you in Coyote Cañon to bring the poor sergeant on to the fort."

"Yes, chief, we'll push through hard," replied the scout, and half an hour after the party were on the trail, Buffalo Bill aroused by the disappearance of Sherman Canfield, and vowing vengeance against those who had harmed him.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SEARCH.

When the morning dawned the scouts were encamped in Coyote Cañon, except those who had pushed on to Eagle Peak after the sergeant's body,

and daylight found them not many miles from the scene where the graves were.

With the first hint of dawn the scouts under Buffalo Bill were in the saddle, and, though there had been many horses along the trail since, the track of the sergeant's horse was here and there picked out.

Buffalo Bill had shown where the youth had been when he lost sight of him, and from there the trail was taken and slowly picked out from the others, until it reached the river.

There they saw other tracks, which had come into the main trail, not very far back, coming down from the mountain range.

There were three horses that made this trail.

Across the stream were seen the tracks of three other horses, which had come up the bank along the river and crossed.

But nowhere could a track of the sergeant's horse be found on the other side.

A most thorough search was made by all the scouts for several hours, but there was not a track seen that belonged to Rex, and some of the men went back several miles on foot toward the fort.

"He came to the river, but never crossed. Now to follow those strange tracks which the three across the river joined, and yet only five are visible going back. The Ranger Regulators certainly did not go out of the cañon, save on the trail to the settlement. I met them all going into Overland City. That means that these six new tracks were not made by the Ranger Regulators, so that lets them out; but who did make them, and whoever did either killed the boy and threw his body in the river, and his horse, too, or carried him off a prisoner.

"Now, men, all except three of you go on the trail of the six horses, and the others will take the stream for it. To-night we will camp here, unless word comes from the fort that the boy has arrived."

The scouts listened with deepest attention to their chief, and those to follow the trail at once started off.

The three others remaining with the chief, at his order rode into the stream, and each one took the water upon each side, up and down the stream.

Their duty was to discover where any trail had left the water on either side, or entered it.

Buffalo Bill took the bank along which Slayback and his young prisoner had gone, and as he rode along against the current, close inshore, his keen



eyes searched every foot of the bank for some trace of a trail.

He did not seem to tire, or grow impatient, but held right on slowly, still scanning the shore.

At last he came to where a small inlet flowed into the river, and here he halted.

He regarded the bottom of the little stream closely and its sides, as though he expected to find some result from his observation.

The rivulet was but a few inches deep, the water ran slowly, and the bottom was sandy.

Up the stream the scout rode a few paces, and then suddenly halted.

His eyes had been rewarded by a sign.

That sign would not have been noticed save by a skilled frontiersman, but to Buffalo Bill it told wonders.

What he saw was where bunches of grass had been cropped off in several places along the banks.

"A horse did that as he went by," muttered the scout, and soon after he came to where there were hoof-tracks in the soft bank.

"Ah! the horse that was being led attempted to get out of the stream here.

"I am on the right track; those hoofprints tell the story."

He turned in the stream, and, riding back to its mouth, hailed his comrade on the other side.

"Come over, Ben, for I have found signs," he called out.

The man went on to where he could cross at the shoals, and soon after joined his chief.

Up the little stream they went for several miles, and then they came to a meadow under a cliff.

In this meadow were two horses staked out.

They had been unsaddled, the saddles and bridles hanging upon a tree near, but their riders were not visible anywhere.

One of the horses was the sergeant's, Rex, the other the animal ridden by the masked guard who had been left in charge of Sherman Canfield—the man Slayback.

But neither Slayback nor his young prisoner were anywhere to be seen.

"So far so good," said Buffalo Bill.

But there was no one in sight, and the keen eyes of the two men could find no track left by those they were anxious to discover.

"Ben."

"Yes, chief."

"I take it that the boy was brought here by his guard, and, as the horses are left, it cannot be very far to some camp or retreat."

"That's so, sir."

"Now, those who have got hold of the boy cannot be the Ranger Regulators."

"I don't exactly see how they could be, as you met the gang in Overland City after they had parted from the boy, chief."

"Yes; he went on toward the fort and got caught between two parties of the Masked Gold Ghouls, for who else could it be that captured him?"

"No one else but the Gold Ghouls."

"That is my way of reading the signs, and they sent him on here under the guard of one of their number, while the others followed another trail."

"That's it, Chief Cody."

"Now, we must catch those who come here for these horses, for we cannot follow any foot trail away from here."

"We can bag 'em when they come."

"Well, Ben, I will go into hiding here to-day, while you return to the ford and wait for the men to come in."

"Let them go into camp there, unless they have made some important discovery, and you and Jack then come back up here."

"Yes, chief."

"Leave your horses half a mile below and come on foot, keeping in hiding until you reach me, for I shall take up a position in yonder clump of rocks, with the half a dozen cedars upon it. If they come for the horses while you are gone I will have something to report, and if not you and Jack can go on duty through the night, in fact must remain here until they do come, or you are sure that they know you are on the watch and have given up the horses, for they may have a hiding-place near and see us."

"Those chances we must run, but you must give them no opportunity to pick you off from an ambush, and you will have to live upon cold food and water for a few days, so bring plenty with you from the camp."

"I will, chief."

"Take my horse back with you, for if I have to ride there are two animals, and when I am relieved by you to-night I will take yours and Jack's horses back with me."



"And when we give up, if they don't come, we can ride the two horses here, chief?"

"That is just it, Ben. Now, slip away, and do not return before nightfall."

The scout did slip away from the retreat among the rocks, leaving Buffalo Bill on the watch.

The fact that he might have to face several men did not worry the chief of scouts in the least.

He had a good retreat, had his rifle and belt of arms with him, and was ready for any danger that might come his way.

He spread his blankets in the shelter of the group of cedars, and, arranging branches about him, which would hide him and yet give him a view of the horses staked out a couple of hundred yards away from the group of rocks, he settled down to wait for the rest of the day with all the patience of an Indian.

Meanwhile Scout Ben had gone to where his own and the chief's horses had been left, and, mounting, had ridden away down the stream.

He led the chief's horse, and returned by the water just as they had come.

Reaching the large stream he held on down its banks after he left the little creek, and arrived at the camp near the ford where two scouts had been left with the pack animals and extra horses in case of an accident, for Buffalo Bill never went on a trail even for a day without being prepared for a week's stay if necessary.

An hour after the arrival of Ben the two men sent down the river to search the banks returned, stating they had gone as far as they found it possible for any horse to leave the stream by either bank.

The other scouts came in later, and they reported having tracked the five horses to where the trail was lost in the great number of other hoof tracks going to and from Overland City.

"We have been foiled, Ben, and now it remains to see what luck the chief will have," said Jack, as he prepared to go with Ben to join Buffalo Bill.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A MASKED ENEMY.

Buffalo Bill was not one to fret at delay.

He had schooled himself to wait patiently for anything that was worth waiting for.

There were the two horses staked out, the ser-

geant's and the one ridden, beyond doubt he believed, by an outlaw.

That Sherman Canfield was a prisoner he was sure.

Taken on foot from where the horses had been left, he would not naturally be far away.

The meadow where the horses were was in the head of a large cañon, surrounded by lofty, bold cliffs that were certainly impossible for a horse to climb.

But a man could scale them, and doubtless that was the way the captor had taken his captive.

If there was a retreat near, it was where the horses could not be taken.

If those Gold Ghouls were mounted, then they certainly had a place where they kept their horses.

Having placed his prisoner in safety, the guard would, without doubt, return to take the horses to their hiding-place.

Thus argued Buffalo Bill, and he would wait for the coming of that man who wanted those horses.

It was late in the afternoon, when the shadows from the cliff were falling across the meadowland, that he happened to glance upward and beheld a man suddenly come into view.

He appeared upon the cliff, glanced down to where the horses were feeding, and then walked away.

Now and then his head appeared in view, but then disappeared.

"He is coming down into the meadow after the horses.

"I could not see distinctly, but I think he wore a mask.

"Well, I must unmask him, that is all."

So mused the scout, and he at once prepared for the ordeal he felt was before him.

He got his rifle and revolver ready, and waited.

It was more than a half hour before the man suddenly reappeared in the meadow, coming along the base of the cliffs.

He ran and leaped the little creek as he approached it, and walked straight toward the horses.

That he wore a mask Buffalo Bill now saw distinctly, and he was armed with a rifle slung at his back, and a belt in which revolvers were visible.

He first walked toward the horse of the guard, pulled up the stake rope and led him to the tree where the saddle and bridle hung.



He had just tightened the girth, when he heard the words quietly uttered:

"Say, pard, let us get better acquainted."

With an exclamation of alarm, he threw himself into his saddle, and was dashing away, when loud came the command from Buffalo Bill:

"Halt, or I will bring you down!"

His answer was to fire his revolver at the scout, and at once came a reply.

Down went the horse in a heap, the man falling heavily, but quickly dragging himself to the shelter of the animal's body.

He attempted to use his rifle against the scout, now rushing upon him, but the weapon had been broken in his fall, and he dropped it for his revolver, which he quickly drew.

"Surrender and I will spare you!" shouted Buffalo Bill.

But the response was a shot that clipped the scout's shoulder.

Then Buffalo Bill pulled trigger, striking the horn of the saddle behind which the man was sheltering himself.

He hoped to splinter it, blinding the man so that he could run upon him and capture him alive.

The splinters did fly in his face, but his eyes were uninjured, protected by the mask as they were, and he fired again, this time the bullet whistling by the scout's left ear.

Still anxious to take him alive, Buffalo Bill took big chances, and this time fired to break the pistol arm.

The bullet passed through the flesh, but did not harm the bone, and the outlaw at bay again fired, shouting as he did so:

"I know you, Buffalo Bill, and it is your life or mine!"

"Then your life it is," responded Buffalo Bill, as he still ran upon the man, and, halting quickly, he took aim and the bullet crashed through the brain of the outlaw.

The horse killed by Buffalo Bill had fallen with his head under him, thus, with his saddle and traps on, it formed a good breastwork for his rider.

The man had thrown himself at full length behind him, and prepared to fight to the death.

Thus Buffalo Bill had found him, his revolver still clutched in his hand, as he lay upon his face.

The scout turned him over and removed the mask, which the bullet had passed through.

A darkly bronzed, bearded face was revealed, the bullet having entered the forehead.

It was an ugly face, even in death, and the man wore the coarse garb of a mountaineer.

About his waist was a buckskin belt heavy with gold, silver and paper money, and in it also were a couple of watches and some jewelry.

Upon his hat, made into a pin, was a twenty-dollar gold piece, the emblem of the Gold Ghouls.

"My shot was not amiss, for this shows who and what he was," muttered the scout, and he took the gold-piece pin off of the slouch hat, and put it in the money belt he wore.

"There are my three shots all accounted for, but I am sorry I had to kill him.

"If I could only have taken him alive, I would have been glad, indeed.

"Now to leave him until the boys come, but, as no one ever will doubtless come for the horses, at least until they come to see what has become of their pard, I will give Rex some water."

He went up to the sergeant's horse as he spoke and led him to water, staking him out in a fresh feeding place when he took him back.

The horse proved his appreciation of the kindness by a low neigh, for he had not had any water since staked out by the man who was Sherman Canfield's guard.

Going toward the cliffs from which the man had come, Buffalo Bill sought to find some trail of where he had come down.

But a search of an hour revealed nothing, and, as it was becoming too dark to see, he retreated to his place of refuge and awaited the coming of the two men he expected.

They came half an hour after nightfall, and the scout at once told them what had occurred, and then went on to say:

"We must fix that dead horse up in a position as though he was only lying down to rest, and stake him out where he was before. The sergeant's horse must be put back at dawn where he was first left, and you two boys go into hiding here for a couple of days, for, when finding their comrade does not return, they may come here to look him up.

"If they do, try and catch one of them, at least, alive. If they do not return, then come on to the



fort. That man yonder we will take back in the woods and hang to-night."

They were not long in hanging the outlaw's body, and the horse, with the aid of Rex, was dragged to his former place and with stakes his body and head were arranged as though he was simply lying down, so if any one came to the cliff above it would appear as though nothing had happened in the meadow.

When all was arranged, Buffalo Bill went down to where the scouts had left their horses, Ben accompanying him, and, mounting one of the animals, he rode away.

It was after midnight when he rode into camp and his men welcomed him gladly, as they always did, for he was their idol, and they heard his story of the fight in the meadow with the Masked Gold Ghoul.

Then they told how they had been foiled in their efforts to make any discovery of importance, while they had lost the trail of the men they had followed.

In the morning there rode into the camp the party sent to find the grave of the dead sergeant, and they had the body with them.

They had ridden hard, and had been met at Coyote Cañon by an ambulance, so were to take the body on at once to the fort.

Having left orders with the men who were to still remain in camp until the return of the two who had been left to watch for the coming of the outlaws to the meadow, Buffalo Bill decided to wait no longer for the rescue of Sherman Canfield, but to go at once with a band of his scouts to the aid of the youth's comrades, whom he hoped to find from what had been told him as to their place of refuge.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FOUND.

Buffalo Bill was most anxious regarding the fate of the brave boy who had so strangely crossed his path, and then so mysteriously disappeared.

He had done all he could to rescue him so far, had made the discovery that it was by the Gold Ghouls that he had been carried off, and, having killed one of them, he had left two of his best men on watch for others.

If they made any discovery, either capturing an outlaw sent to look up their slain comrade, or had tracked him to his lair, then the men would know

what to do whom he had left in the camp for just such a possibility.

The body of Sergeant Fessenden had been taken on to the fort, under the guard of scouts, and the report made to the chief had exactly carried out the story of Sherman Canfield.

This, and his duel with the outlaw in the meadow, and what were his surmises, the chief of scouts had written to Colonel Carr, stating that he had gone on with eight of his men to the aid of the youth's comrades, who, from what the boy had said, sadly needed assistance.

The first night's camp Buffalo Bill made where the sergeant and Brad Dixon had been buried; but he was off at dawn on the trail to find the gold-hunters in distress.

The youth had told him enough as to where he had left them, that he would not have to follow his trail, if that was possible, so he struck off across the country to reach the locality with all haste.

A well-packed animal had been brought along, with food in plenty, and Buffalo Bill led himself, straight as the crow flies, as he was noted for going when not following a trail.

He only moved from his direct course where he had to do so, and the sun was yet an hour high when he came to a halt and remarked to his comrades:

"Here is a trail, and it must be theirs, for it is a week old, at least, and you see that there is the mark of a *travois*, which must have been made for a wounded man unable to ride."

The scouts dismounted, followed the trail on foot for a mile, examined it closely and they were convinced that they were on the track of the party to be rescued.

There were the tracks of nine horses, or rather ponies, none of them being shod, and the scraping trail of a *travois* fastened to one of them.

The trail led toward a mountain range not far away.

At a gallop the chief led his men on, hoping to reach the camp of the party before darkness set in.

They came to a stream, which they crossed, then saw that the trail followed along the banks of a tiny creek flowing out of a cañon.

Then Buffalo Bill, at the mouth of the cañon, made another discovery, which was the track of a single



horse coming out of it and branching off along the mountain range.

This track seemed fresher than the main trail, and the same hoof prints were found among those going on up the cañon.

"We are right, for that is the track of the boy's pony, when he came for help for his comrades.

"We will find them up this cañon," said Buffalo Bill.

But as they rode on at a canter they crossed a trail coming from one side, where they now saw there was an opening through into another cañon.

This trail was made by a dozen ponies, none of them being shod, and turned on up the cañon.

"That looks like an Indian trail, boys, and we will be apt to find the party besieged, if they have not been wiped out.

"We'll push on rapidly."

And on they went, now at a fast gallop, to, after a ride of a mile further, come in view of a smoke from a campfire at the head of a cañon.

The smoke came from a huge log that was still burning, for the camp held no living being.

But, dead ones it did hold, for here, scattered about, killed and scalped, were the gold hunters, and at the approach of the scouts, scores of coyotes dashed yelping away.

"We have found them, comrades," and Buffalo Bill raised his sombrero in the presence of the dead.

"Murdered by Indians, chief."

"Killed last night doubtless, or yesterday."

"They were outnumbered and overmatched."

"They look as though they had not had overmuch to eat."

"The bullet marks on the trees and rocks about show that they fought game."

"The redskins scalped them, took their clothes, weapons, horses and all."

"Will you camp here, chief?"

Such were the expressions that were uttered by the group of scouts, as they sat upon their horses, with uncovered heads, gazing down upon the sad and tragic sight before them.

"Yes, we will camp here to-night. Get the bodies together boys, and wrap them in blankets, so we can bury them, and, Luke, you had better go down the cañon several hundred yards and stand guard, though I do not believe the perpetrators of this red deed are anywhere about now."

So said Buffalo Bill, and while two of the men led the horses away to stake out, and another went down the cañon to stand guard, the others built up the fire and began to prepare the dead men for burial.

The chief of scouts looked carefully at each body before they were wrapped in blankets and bound around with lariats, and then went about in the fading light to see if he could find any traces of the perpetrators of the deed.

The graves were soon dug under the shadow of the cliffs and the five bodies placed in them.

Then the scouts set about getting supper, all of them in a strangely quiet mood.

After supper two of the men went down to relieve Luke, and to go on duty, sharing the watch between them until midnight, when they would wake two more up and let them stand guard until dawn.

Buffalo Bill retired early, and his men knew by his manner that he was in deep thought regarding the killing of the gold hunters.

The next morning, when breakfast was over, the chief of scouts said:

"See here, boys, I do not believe that this was the work of redskins, and for several reasons I will tell you later.

"Set to work now all of you, and see what you can make of the signs, and we will leave here after dinner at noon, so you will have plenty of time."

The men did set to work, for they visited the strange trail coming into the cañon and going from it.

They looked all around the camp, and a most thorough search was made of the cañon for every sign that they could read against the slayers of the gold hunters.

When they all gathered for dinner Buffalo Bill called for their reports and listened attentively to what each one told of what he had discovered.

At last he said:

"Your evidence in every case but carries out my view of the matter. Those who did the work came here on unshod Indian ponies, and that would indicate redskins; but the tribes about here are but poorly armed with rifles, and very few revolvers indeed, and yet we do not find a single arrow wound upon the dead men. Also we find no arrows scattered about, and I have looked, as you all have, in



vain for moccasin tracks. But the imprints of boots are frequent.

"The wounds received by the men were in each case made with a revolver bullet, for I tested the size with large rifle bullets, and they would not enter the wounds, while pistol bullets did. I also noticed, although the coyotes had been tugging at the bodies, that three out of the five bodies had powder burns upon their faces, showing that the shots were made at close quarters. They also had half a dozen wounds, any one of which would have killed them, and Indians do not throw ammunition away shooting into dead bodies, but white men do for effect."

"You've called the turn, Chief Cody, for white men, not Injuns, did the work; but they fixed it, by scalping the bodies and in other ways to look that way," said one of the scouts.

"And here is stronger proof, still, for I picked up this gold pin last night, and it is the badge worn by the Gold Gouls," and Buffalo Bill held up one of the twenty-dollar gold pieces mounted as a pin, and added:

"I've got two now."

The more the scouts thought over the matter the more they were convinced that the little band of gold hunters had been wiped out by white men, not redskins.

There was in their minds thorough conviction, after hearing their chief's opinion, and then the talk turned upon just who those white men could be.

The gold pin badge found by Buffalo Bill pointed to the Gold Gouls being the guilty ones.

But it seemed as though the party who had done the deed had gone there especially for the purpose of killing the gold hunters.

The Indians, Sherman Canfield had said, had driven the gold hunters to retreat to the cañon, but had not followed them there for some reason.

When he had left the redskins had not been in sight, and later he had run upon the same band and they had killed his horse.

But the Indians knew that the gold hunters had retreated to the mountain range, yet, how the outlaws had found it out was the question.

Buffalo Bill, in talking it over with his men, told what young Canfield had said in the presence of the Ranger Regulators, so that the scouts might give their opinions, and often he got good ideas from their doing so.

They were not long in giving their opinions, and that of one of them caught the chief's ear at once.

"What did you say, Ernest?"

"Well, sir, I was thinking as the Ranger Regulators heard the boy's story as you did, they must have been as well posted as you were as to where to find them, and in talking it over at Overland City some men, who were perhaps secretly Gold Gouls had heard them, and started off to find the outfit."

"That looks plausible, Ernest, especially as they might have supposed, in spite of Canfield saying they had been unlucky, that the gold hunters had considerable gold with them."

"That's about it, chief."

"Then we will take the trail and follow it, wherever it leads."

"You are the doctor, sir," said Ernest, with a smile, and half an hour after the scouts were mounted and on the trail out of the cañon.

It departed by a different route from the one it had come in, and there were a number more tracks covering it, for the riders had the gold hunters' horses with them on the retreat.

Buffalo Bill led the way, and once the trail left the cañon it branched off into the mountains going straight for the Indian country.

This caused the scouts to look at each other, as though they were losing faith in the theory of the chief that it was white men who had done the deed.

But if Buffalo Bill was losing faith in his opinions he did not reveal it but held straight on upon the trail for mile after mile.

The men were becoming more and more convinced that Indians were in reality the guilty ones, and were growing a trifle anxious at their chief pushing so near the village stronghold of the redskins, when suddenly they saw their leader turn sharply to the right.

He made no comment, but from where he turned off, a hundred feet away could be seen the main Indian trail to the stronghold, lying many rods below the one the scouts followed.

The latter could not be seen from the Indian trail, and it branched off before reaching it.

This would indicate that if the Indians were the guilty ones they had, for some reason, avoided the trail to their own village.

On went the chief of scouts as before, the trail



leading him now back almost in the direction they had come, yet going obliquely to the left.

A few miles on the trail and each scout was convinced that their chief, as usual, was right, for they saw that the trail was setting away toward Overland City and not to the Indian camp.

When at last the chief halted for a night camp, he simply remarked:

"They played a grand bluff, to go so near the Indian village, and then branch off.

"But it did not fool us worth a cent, did it, boys?"

The boys were silent, for it had fooled them, and not their chief.

They were too near the Indian village to build fires, so camped in the dark and ate a cold supper, while a strong guard was posted for the night.

But no alarm came, and at dawn they were again in the saddle following the same devious trail which was now seemingly leading directly for Overland City.

The trail the scouts followed soon showed them that there was no longer any doubt as to who had made it, when they came to where the party had camped.

"They are two nights and a day ahead of us, boys; but we know we are right. This is no Indian's camping place, but a white man's," and Buffalo Bill pointed to signs that his men at once read as an open book, such as the tracks of boots, the building of one large fire instead of several little ones, as is the Indian custom, and the manner in which the horses had been staked out.

They came to the Overland City trail toward nightfall, and there the one they followed joined it, the tracks becoming so blended with many others as not to be picked out, even by the keen eyes of the scouts.

It was here, too, where the trail of the five horsemen from the river had been lost by the scouts who had been following it, and so Buffalo Bill said:

"The trail at least goes toward Overland City, and here it ends.

"There also are to be found the men who killed those gold hunters, and, not knowing that we have discovered their deed, in time they can be found out.

"I will ride on into Overland City and try and find out if any party of men have been seen to leave, or come in during the last few days, save, of course, the Ranger Regulators."

"Had we not better go with you, chief?"

"No, I will go alone."

"Some of 'em may be hot about the colonel's order to the Ranger Regulators to disband, and wish to take their spite out on you."

"I will seek no trouble, boys, but if it comes I must meet it.

"You go to the river and camp to-night, and I will come there, and to-morrow we will push for the fort.

"I hope Ben has brought in some news of that poor young pard of mine," and with a wave of his hand Buffalo Bill continued on the trail to Overland City.

He knew a number of the people there, but was not sure of any real friends, and so he felt that he would have to be cautious about whom he questioned.

Arriving in Overland City, he saw that the placards of the colonel had been torn down, but he did not care for that, so long as they were known, and thus had answered their purpose.

Riding up to the tavern, he saw a crowd there, and one man called out, as he saw him:

"I s'pose you has come to know who tuk down them papers, Buffalo Bill?"

"Oh, no; it is none of my business, so long as I put them up and they were read."

"Waal, I made it my business to take 'em down, and I says that whar the army don't pectect us, we has got ter do it ourselves, and we intends ter have ther Ranger Regulators ter do the biz, and don't you forgit it."

"That is your opinion, I suppose?"

"It's more than mine, and you'll find it out, too."

"Well, I am not the commandant, so go and tell Colonel Carr, not me."

"Oh, you'll tell him, and, so he knows it, that's what I wants."

"See here, you know what that placard read, do you not?"

"I does."

"You intend to disobey it?"

"Yes; I is one of ther Ranger Regulators, and, you bet, I'm in it ter stay."

"All right; you and your gang just attempt to run this frontier as you have been doing, and you have my word for it that Colonel Carr will treat you just as he would any other outlaws, so take advice and be warned."



"Does yer threaten me, Buffalo Bill?" and the man dropped his hand upon his revolver.

"See here, pard, you seem to be spoiling for a fight."

Buffalo Bill smiled as he uttered the words. His face showed no anger, no excitement.

Quickly came the words:

"Yas, when my rights is put down by soldiers, I is spoilin' for a fight, and I hain't afeerd o' you, ef yer do be Buffalo Bill."

This was a direct challenge flung into the face of the scout.

The crowd understood it as such, and they gazed at the man with surprise, for, reckless as they knew him to be, they did not believe he would dare face Buffalo Bill.

The scout did not accept the challenge, as many expected he would, by attempting to draw his revolver and beginning a duel then and there.

Instead, he said, with the utmost calmness and a tone of sadness in his voice:

"See here, pard, life is too short to spend it in quarreling, and, more, it is too valuable to be thrown away.

"I do not wish to kill you, I do not intend you shall kill me, so, if you have any grievance against Colonel Carr, go to the fort and tell him so—convince him that you are not as bad as the criminals that your band of regulators hunt down."

"Does you call us a lot of criminals?"

"No; I have no real proof that you are, only I know a great many innocent people have suffered at the hands of the Ranger Regulators, a number of guilty ones have escaped, and the colonel has been asked by the best people of the settlement to disband you.

"He has done so, and, if you do not obey his orders, he will treat you as outlaws.

"That is all there is in it, pard, so don't let us quarrel."

"Waal, we hain't goin' ter disband ter please him and a few cranks in this settlement, and I warns you thet we means business, and ef you don't wish ter tarn up yer toes jist git out o' this community and go a-flyin'; see?"

As he spoke, the man, deceived by the quiet manner of Buffalo Bill, which he mistook for fear of him, for he was a well-known character, whom many

stood in holy awe of, at once attempted to draw his revolver.

No one saw the scout draw his weapon.

His hands had held his bridle reins, and he did not make a motion toward a revolver in his belt, but yet one hand did hold a weapon, a small Derringer which it covered, and, before his adversary could draw his pistol from its holster at his waist, there came a loud report, followed by a yell of pain.

The large bullet of the little Derringer had broken the hand of the regulator, causing him to howl with anguish.

But in a second of time the Derringer had disappeared from the scout's hand, and in its place appeared his revolver, which he had quickly drawn.

Covering the man with it, Buffalo Bill cried, in a voice not to be mistaken:

"Up with that left hand of yours; quick, or my bullet hunts your heart!"

The man, wild with pain, rage and fear, quickly raised his left hand, his right hanging useless and bleeding by his side, while he whined out, piteously:

"Don't kill me, Bill, for my hand is up!"

A loud laugh of derision greeted his words, while up behind Buffalo Bill came four of his scouts, who, against his orders, in their anxiety for him, had followed him into Overland City.

"No need of us, chief, I see.

"Lordy! if it hain't Death Notch Dick you has got corraled," and the scouts laughed as they recognized the lieutenant of the Ranger Regulators, and a man whose boast was that his victims were all remembered by red marks upon his hat, and there were nine of these crimson stains, which he had placed there as a record of his deadly deeds.

The arrival of the four scouts caused a quieter feeling in the crowd, for it seemed to indicate that they were there to defend their chief, and others might be near at hand, perhaps a body of soldiers, for it was looked upon as a very reckless thing for Buffalo Bill to have come into Overland City alone, after the feeling many had against him for his putting up the colonel's placard.

The better men of the crowd were glad to see the scouts come, and they were assured that there would be no further trouble.

The fallen idol of the element who had regarded Death Notch Dick, the lieutenant of the Ranger Reg-



ulators, had no sympathy from the crowd, in spite of his bullet-shattered hand.

He stood, white-faced, suffering and glaring, before the chief of scouts, his left hand still elevated.

The crowd had laughed at him to see how quickly, after starting the trouble with Buffalo Bill, he had been humbled.

Not one present was there who did not know that Buffalo Bill had not fired to kill, but to wound, and none knew this better than Death Notch Dick.

That the scout's aim had been so true with a little Derringer, not much longer than his finger, was proof of what he was capable of doing with a revolver.

Buffalo Bill was the first to break the silence, and he spoke in a kindly tone:

"Come, Pard Dick, lower your hand, for quits, as you wanted to kill me, and I was only a trifle the quickest.

"Ernest, go and hunt up the doctor and bring him with all speed here, while I stop the flow of blood," and Buffalo Bill took his silk scarf from about his neck, and, approaching Death Notch Dick, drew up the sleeve of his shirt and tied it about the arm to check its bleeding.

"It passed through the back of the hand, shattering the bone of the middle finger, so it is not so bad after all, considering that a Derringer bullet made the wound.

"Ah! here comes Dr. Dillon now. Fortunately, he was near at hand."

As the scout spoke, there dashed up to the spot Scout Ernest, accompanied by Dr. Dillon, a young physician who had been an army surgeon, but who had resigned to practice in the settlement, as he felt that it was more profitable than mining or army pay, and he had a sweetheart waiting for him until he could save up money enough to build her a home in the East.

He was a skilled surgeon, and had his surgical and medicine case with him.

"Ah, Bill, this is some of your work, is it?"

"Yes, and you have been playing surgeon also?"

"Give the man a stiff drink of whisky, and I'll soon have him all right," and the young doctor set to work in a way that proved his skill.

The shattered bone was taken out, the wound dressed, and the hand placed in a sling, and then Death Notch Dick growled out:

"How much, Doc, does yer charge?"

"Nothing for Buffalo Bill's work, Dick—let it go at that, and I'll nurse it well for you, only you must not pick a quarrel with my friend here, or you'll get the worst of it.

"Bill has two natures, the lamb and the lion, and my advice is not to rub him against the fur."

"Much obleeged, Doc, and I guess I'll take your advice, seein' as I made a fool o' myself and got downed in the bargain," and he held out his left hand to the scout, who grasped it warmly, and, half an hour after, having had a talk with Dr. Duke Dillon, he mounted his horse and rode away, followed by his scouts, one of whom said:

"You must pardon us, chief, for following you, but we feared trouble."

"That is all right, boys, and I am glad you came."

"And don't trust Death Notch Dick, for he is as treacherous as a snake, and that handshake meant that he intended to get square some day."

"Maybe he will," was the quiet reply of Buffalo Bill, and he added:

"We are but human, and a bullet properly aimed will down the best of us.

"But I could find out nothing about any party going into Overland, or leaving it, but Dr. Dillon is going to try and do so for me, and he is true as steel."

It was after nightfall when they rode into the camp on the river, and they found that the two men left at the meadow had just come in, not thinking it worth while to wait any longer, as the wolves were tearing the dead horse to pieces at every chance they got, and none of the comrades of the man who had been slain by Buffalo Bill had come in search of him.

The next morning the scouts broke camp and pulled out for Fort Rattle.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE YOUNG PRISONER.

Though in very hard luck, as a prisoner to a band of masked men, and being led away, where he did not know, young Sherman Canfield did not lose his wonderful pluck.

He was suffering from his bonds and the gag in his mouth, and he was uncertain of his fate, but he was glad to remember that he had thwarted the men at least from getting hold of the sergeant's map, papers and valuables, and that Buffalo Bill would soon discover that he had not turned up at the fort.



That the great scout would look him up, he did not doubt; but when he saw the care taken by his guard to cover up his trail he could not see how it was possible for even Buffalo Bill to track him.

He had escaped the Ranger Regulators, to fall into the hands of a band that must be far worse, for, where the former pretended to be law abiders, the latter masked their faces and preyed upon their fellow men.

The man who had him in keeping had stuck well to the river, and then to the bed of the little rivulet, until at last they came in sight of a meadow overhung by a lofty cliff.

Here he seemed to feel that he was safe, or had thrown pursuit wholly off his trail, for he staked his horses out, made Sherman dismount, and then, seeing that the youth was suffering greatly with the gag he removed it from his mouth and gave him a drink of water from his canteen.

Sherman said, in his dry way:

"Thank you, sir, for being human.

"I was nearly choked to death."

"Waal, I don't mind yer yellin' here, so I'll give yer a rest on ther gag; but don't come no monkey work, or I'll make yer swallow it again."

"Just tell me what monkey work is, so I can avoid it."

"You knows well enough.

"You is a prisoner, and I has got ter keep yer hands tied, though I'll loosen ther bonds a leetle and tie 'em in front, as we has climbing to do, and plenty of it."

"Where are you taking me?"

"Maybe to your grave," was the significant remark.

"It's the same trail all must travel," came the cool reply.

"Waal, you don't skeer very bad, and I've got a sneakin' notion you is a hard nut ter crack, if yer hain't been many years out o' baby clothes.

"Come, we'll push on now, and when we gits whar I'm takin' yer, then yer'll hev more time to rest than you'll want."

"Are you going to walk?"

"You bet."

"Isn't it just as cheap to ride?"

"Ther fare is about ther same," and the man laughed and added:

"You're a good one."

"And, if signs don't fail me, you're a bad one."

"Come, don't get fresh, or I'll muzzle yer ag'in."

"I'm dumb."

The man laughed and led the way toward the cliff, when Sherman said:

"See here, why not ride?"

He was anxious to leave a trail, but the man answered:

"Horses can't go up whar we does, and so we walks.

"Come here, now."

He led the way up to the cliff, where a rocky shelf was visible some twenty feet above their heads, and upon it grew a small cedar, one limb of which was dead.

The man had brought his lariat along, and, skillfully throwing it, the noose caught over the bare limb and was drawn taut.

Then up the cliff went the man, climbing the lariat with his hands, and using his feet against the rocks.

Reaching the rocky shelf, he called out:

"I'll make it easier for you, pard."

With this he lowered a large rope he had taken from its hiding place among the rocks, and on the end of which there was a kind of harness to fasten about the form.

Descending the rope, he fastened the harness about Sherman, and, climbing up again, began to haul him up slowly.

"You is a pretty good heft," he said, as he drew the youth upon the shelf and took off the harness.

Then he hid the rope away among the rocks, picked up his lariat and told the youth to follow him.

Sherman did so in silence, and they went along the rocky shelf, climbing upward here and there, and at times passing along narrow spaces where only the most perfect nerve would steady a man.

Twice the guide asked the youth whether he got dizzy at great heights, and each time the answer came:

"Don't mind me, but push on, only I wish my arms were free, so I could cling to the rocks."

The boy had devised a plan for escape already. He would first induce his captor to free his hands, and then he would make a sudden dash for liberty. To carry out his plan would require some strategy. First, he must induce the outlaw 'o believe that he was unable to climb further, because of his weariness.



ness, unless he had his hands free to assist him in his efforts.

So the boy began to lag behind. He lifted his foot at each step as if it were weighted with lead, and his breath came in panting gasps, while his mouth hung open.

All this was assumed, of course, as the boy had a frame like steel and the endurance and wind of a broncho, and he could easily have run the outlaw, who was evidently a drinking man, off his legs, if put to it.

The appearance of extreme weariness fooled the outlaw completely. The climb was a hard one for him, and he thought that it must be doubly hard for his young companion. And so, when the boy stumbled and fell behind, he sometimes lent him a helping hand, and sometimes waited a moment until the boy had apparently rested a little and was more able to proceed on the hard climb they were taking.

Meanwhile, Sherman was observing the trail carefully, noting the places where he must be careful of his footings, and the rocks which would shelter him from a shot.

At length he pretended to stumble and fall heavily upon the ground.

He lay there, panting, for a while, while the outlaw waited, and finally lifted him upon his feet. But the boy fell limply to the ground again, and made a motion with his hands to indicate that the bonds were cutting into his flesh.

"Waal," said the bandit, "I guess you'll rest easier for a minute, if yer bindings is cut, and thar's no chanst of yer gittin' away from me in yer present condition."

He leaned over as he spoke, and severed the bonds binding the hands of the boy.

A second later, he was dashed on the ground with a force that stunned him, and his former prisoner was away, bounding like an antelope down the trail, up which he had climbed so laboriously and slowly.

## CHAPTER X.

### BUFFALO BILL'S REPORT.

The return of the two scouts to the camp on the river, without having seen the outlaws, who were expected to look up their lost comrade, was a great disappointment to Buffalo Bill.

He had hoped that they would have some news.

But, as none was to be had, he broke camp to return to the fort, and, after making a full report to Colonel Carr, make a fresh start in search of the lost youth.

So back to the fort they went, and, upon their arrival, Buffalo Bill found the colonel anxiously awaiting him.

"Well, Cody, I am glad to see you back; but where is that brave boy?"

"In the hands of the Gold Ghouls, colonel, I am very sorry to say."

"I received your report of your camp and what you were doing, but nothing very late, so tell me what has been done."

"Well, sir, in one sense, considerable, in another very little."

"Yes, it was a good thing to get the body of poor Fessenden, and I am glad that you did so. We buried him with full honors, but the paymaster has been waiting to write to his wife and send the pay due him, hoping you would come in with the boy, who could give further information."

"I am sorry I did not find him, colonel; but I have by no means given up hope. He is a plucky fellow, and well able to look out for chances to escape, and, if they have done him no harm, I am hoping he may turn up in camp soon."

"I sincerely hope so."

"I intend to go out again, sir, and take my best men, for a thorough search for the retreat of the Gold Ghouls, who certainly are in the mountains beyond Coyote Cañon, for the man who had the youth prisoner went in that direction with him, and the one who came for the horse, also came from there."

"And did not return?" the colonel said, significantly, having heard the story of the chief of scouts' adventure from those who had come in with the sergeant's body.

"No, sir; he was buried where he fell; but the leaving of the horses where I found them proves that one cannot ride to the retreat that way, and the man who came after them came from over the cliff.

"His idea was to carry the horses around, how far I do not know, but certainly their retreat must be where they can go and come on horseback."

"I should certainly think so, Cody, but you went off on the trail of the boy to the relief of his comrades?"



"Yes, sir, and I have a sad story to tell you of our discovery."

The story was told, of finding the bodies, and how they had been scalped and all indications left to let it be supposed Indians had done the deed.

The colonel's brows darkened as Buffalo Bill went on to give his proofs that white men were the guilty ones, and they could only be the Gold Ghouls, while they had been tracked into Overland City settlement.

"If the boy was here, colonel, he could pick out the ponies belonging to his comrades, and we would soon have the men.

"But, without him, it will be hard to find them, unless Dr. Duke Dillon can find me a clew, and he is trying to look up the case now."

"He will find the men if any one there will, but he will have to be careful, as those Gold Ghouls must have spies and secret friends in the settlement."

"There is no doubt of that, colonel; but I have a report to make, sir, and I trust you will not consider me to blame in the matter, though there were witnesses you can get the story from, also, sir."

"I believe your words indicate a killing scrape, but I feel that you will tell me the affair as it happened."

"I will, sir; but it is not so bad as a killing scrape.

"No man shuns the taking of human life more than I, sir, but on account of my position as a scout, I am often forced into a difficulty that means my life or that of my foe, and such was the case to-day, sir.

"You have heard of Death Notch Dick, sir?"

"Ah, yes—a desperado, though one of the Ranger Regulators."

"Well, sir, he began to kick against your order to disband the regulators, got abusive, and, though I advised him, for the good of his health, to go slow, he attempted to draw his revolver on me, when, having slipped my Derringer from my sleeve into my grip, I sent a bullet through his hand.

"I then ordered him to hold the other up, and Dr. Dillon was sent for and fixed him up all right.

"He shook hands with me when I left, but he'll kill me the first chance he gets, as I well know."

"There is no doubt of that, Cody, for he is a desperate, dangerous and very bad man, and I regret that you were so merciful, and I shall let the matter rest as it is, only be careful to keep your eye on him."

"I will, sir."

"How do the other regulators take my order to disband?"

"They will obey it, sir, and save trouble, but they growl, of course."

"I shall send a troop through the settlement once each week, to show them I am on the watch."

"It will be a good idea, sir, and Dr. Dillon will report anything of importance, as he promised me to do so, and going all around as he does to the mining camps, ranches, farms, and living right in Overland City he has every chance to find out if anything is going wrong."

"He certainly has, and he is a plucky fellow, too, but now to this unfortunate young protégé of yours, this brave boy Canfield, for we must make a strong effort to rescue him?"

"We must, sir, and I will leave to-night with a dozen of my picked men for that purpose," was Buffalo Bill's reply.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCLUSION.

Before Buffalo Bill's party were ready to start that night, a small figure limped slowly up toward the parade ground, in front of the fort, and was challenged by the sentry.

"Sherman Canfield, a friend of Buffalo Bill," was the answer to the sentry's gruffly uttered: "Who goes there?"

A half hour later, Sherman was comfortably seated at a steaming hot supper, and a half hour after that was telling of his escape from the Gold Ghouls.

Sherman, whom the great scout had taken a fancy to, accompanied Buffalo Bill on many of his scouts after that. Buffalo Bill always referring to him as his "Best Bower."

In one of these scouts the maps indicating the position of the gold mine, which Sherman had fallen half heir to, were located, and the mine itself found, together with gold enough stored near it to make Sherman a rich man.

Sherman Canfield decided to go East, on the advice of Buffalo Bill, who urged him to complete his education.

### THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 68) will contain: "Buffalo Bill and the Gold Ghouls; or, Defying Death at Elephant Rock." Sherman Canfield did not go East, as he expected to, and again fell into the hands of the Gold Ghouls. How he escaped again, and how Buffalo Bill wiped the Gold Ghouls off the face of the earth will be told in next week's issue.





# THRILLING ADVENTURE



Hustle them in now, boys, if you ever hustled in your lives before. This is your last chance. Only a few days more.

Remember all entries must be in by September 1st.

Remember you still have a chance for one of those fishing sets.

Remember they are the finest prizes we ever offered.

Full particulars in regard to this contest on page 31.

## A Fall of Slate.

(By Harry McNulty, Ind.)

At the close of school last September (1901), I thought that I would like to work in the mines. So I bought an outfit for working in the mines—lamp, boots, etc. I got started, and we had been working (my father and myself) for about three months, when one day about nine o'clock in the morning, I had just got the car loaded, all but one large chunk for the corner. So I went over to one end of the room to get a block, and was rolling it over toward the car, when all of a sudden there was a crash, and I was caught under a heavy fall of slate and pinned so I couldn't move.

My father was working in the next room. He heard the fall, and came running in. Then there was another man came in. They got a prop and pried the slate off me, and then got hold of my feet and pulled me out. I was under there about three minutes, and it seemed to me about three hours. My back was wrenched pretty badly, and my arm and back were pretty well cut up. My hands were numb for about two weeks. I was in bed for a month afterward. If it had not been for that chunk of coal I was rolling over, I would have been killed. The men said it was a miracle I was not killed as it was. There are a good many men here who can vouch for the truth of this.

## A Mishap.

(By Willis Butler, La.)

I was working at Simpson's Steam Laundry last vacation, and had to bring a horse and wagon home at night. One Saturday it was late before I started, and I had a glass-sided wagon.

The road was pretty bad part of the way, and when I got to the bad part I met another laundry wagon standing

in the middle of the road, but as it was dark, I thought it was on the side and started driving around it.

When I got about even with it my glass-sided wagon began to turn over slowly, and then went on over with me in it. A man caught the horse, and when I got out it was found that my arm and hip were hurt, and I had lost my money, besides doing damage to the wagon.

The horse was soon unhitched, and I managed to get him home, although I was hurt. The rest of the things were gotten by Mr. Simpson, when he came along.

My arm and hip are all right now, and I am working in a drug store.

## Adventures On a Bicycle.

(By R. G. Leonard, Andover, Ohio.)

It was on the night of the Fourth of July, 1902, and I was going to a neighboring village to witness the display of fireworks that had been advertised.

I intended to go in a carriage, but it was so late when I got ready to go that I decided to take my bicycle, it having a headlight. On the way somebody threw a fire-cracker in the road ahead of me. I was going so fast that I could not stop in time, so I got the front wheel on it, and as it did not go off, I thought that it had gone out, but as the hind wheel was on it it went off, blowing a hole in the tire.

I did not see who threw it, and upon searching, could find no trace of them. I got a bicycle without a headlight of a friend, and continued my journey. I reached the village at about six o'clock. They had a fine display of fireworks. When I got ready to return home, it was so dark that I could only dimly see the outlines of the road. I followed a carriage about half a mile; it then turned out on a crossroad. I then had to go alone. I had not gone ten rods before I struck a rough spot. I tried to turn the bicycle to one side, but in doing so the



front wheel swung around crosswise of the road, and the bicycle was going fast enough to twist about six inches of the tire off the rim. I managed to replace it, however.

I then went a half mile, when suddenly a horse and carriage loomed up in the darkness about five feet ahead of me. I managed to turn aside and let it pass. In another mile a good-sized creek ran alongside of the road. I reached this spot in about ten minutes. The road was very rough here, and I had to keep straining my eyes to see the path. I was at the worst spot when I suddenly looked up and saw a horse and carriage within about two feet of the front of the bicycle. I endeavored to turn out on the creek side. I had not turned more than a foot when the shoulder of the horse struck the front of the bicycle and sent it spinning toward the creek; as it went in, I jumped off.

The water was up to my arms where I jumped off.

When I managed to get ashore, the horse and carriage had disappeared in the darkness. I did not try to recover the bicycle, but started home on foot, which I reached at midnight. It rained during the night. When I went in search of the bicycle next day, the water had risen so high that it had washed away. I had a bicycle to pay for. I think that it was a night quite full of incidents for a thirteen-year-old boy.

### A Fall Through a Trap-Door.

(By William Hunt, Pa.)

While working in a carpenter shop I was sweeping the floor. The shavings were kept in the cellar, and on the top floor was a hole about two feet wide, which went to the cellar.

I was walking along, and slipped and fell through.

I caught the floor as I went down, and called for help. A man who worked there pulled me up, and I was always careful since then.

### General Custer's Last Battle.

(By Homer Lester, Wyoming.)

It was announced during the carnival week at Sheridan, Wyoming, that there would be a reproduction of General Custer's last battle between the Crow Indians and three companies of the State National Guard of Wyoming; Company D, of Sheridan, Wyoming; Company C, of Buffalo, Wyoming, and also Company A, of New Castle, Wyoming, making about one hundred of the State National Guard.

There were about six hundred Indians, brought down from the Crow Reservation, and a large number of them were to take part in the battle.

I am a member of the State National Guard, of Company D, of Sheridan, Wyoming, and so you may know that I was glad enough to take part in the battle. The battle was to take place on a hill, close to town, and at five o'clock on the afternoon of July 4, 1902, when the time arrived for the battle. I was glad to see that a large crowd had assembled to watch us.

Before the battle took place it was said that there were fifteen thousand people gathered on the hill to see the battle; well, at last the hour of the battle arrived, and the

waiting crowd was relieved by seeing the Indians troops going silently to their places.

We were marched around one large hill and down ridge on the other side, and when we were about half down the hill the Indians came swarming down on overwhelming numbers.

The Indians swarmed around through us, shooting yelling all the time, until we would have been all killed they had used ball cartridges.

The pictures that were taken of us, I suppose, will number many hundred. There were three gentlemen here with cameras taking pictures for the moving picture machines.

### Saved By a Friend.

(By Harry English, Ind.)

This is a true story.

The waters were high, and I and some of my friends thought we would go swimming. We went to a place called "Rock Bottom." I went in first and swam a while and was about halfway back, when one of my friends came to help me. I told him I would swim on my back.

He went to the shore and watched me. I had swam almost to the shore when my other friend, by the name Miller, saw me start to sink. I went under three times and he swam and caught me. When I got to the bottom I was as white as a sheet.

I said I would never go in deep water until I could swim well.

I am twelve years old.

### A Second of Peril.

(By Walter Williamson, N. J.)

One day, as I was walking by an apple orchard, I was shot, followed by a cry of "Get out of there." I ran around and saw about six boys running toward me, behind them, running like a deer, was a man with a gun in his hands.

The boys were running like mad. They soon crossed the low fence that surrounded the orchard, and in a moment they were even with me.

The man once more raised his gun and fired. I heard the hum of the shot, and a shrill scream from one of the boys who had been hit.

Instantly I started on a run, too. I had an idea that if I didn't, the man might take me for an apple thief. I was bigger than the other boys, and the man followed me. I kept right on for the railroad track. I could hear the heavy panting of my pursuer, and I knew he was drawing nearer.

When I reached the track, I glanced over my shoulder and saw he was almost on top of me. I gave a sudden burst of speed, crossed the track, bounced over the fence, and was again speeding over a field.

Just ahead of me was a street where the trolley was passing. I strained every muscle to reach it. After running several times, and scratching myself all over, I managed to reach it.

"Stop, you thief!" cried my pursuer. Several men heard his cry, and looked at me as I sped past. I



as the street just as a car turned a bend in the I did not see the car till I was near the track. I had a cry of horror as I saw the car not three yards from me. I put on fresh speed, and seemed about to get to the track in safety, when I tripped and fell. As lucky I was running so fast, or I might have been killed. As it was, I struck the ground slantingly and slid across the track in a second. I picked myself up, bruised all over, and started on. The crowd thought I was under the wheels, and surrounded the car. I quickly dodged into an alley and hid till the excitement was over. After the crowd dispersed, I came out those that saw me did not know I was the boy who had passed through that awful "Second of Peril." The man who chased me never caught me. In fact, I saw him again, and I don't want to.

### An Experience With a Swindler.

(By Carl Cronkwright, Ind.)

I concluded to write an experience of my grandfather, which happened about thirty years ago. I was trying to relate it in his own words, as nearly as I could. After a big show, a man stepped up to me and said, "If you stay to the night show and brag it up, I will give you five dollars." I told him that I would stay at that price. So saying, he handed me a ten-dollar bill, which I placed in my hand to hold. I drew out my pocketbook. At that moment he snatched the bill out of my friend's hand, and also my pocketbook, which I was in the act of opening, and ran. I rose up in my seat, being on the top of the stand leaning forward, I struck him with my clinched fist, driving a blow at the back of the ear. He looked clean from the seats and landed him on his hands and knees at the bottom. He dragged himself away, I saw that he was bleeding at the ear. He disappeared in some dressing tent. I gave chase, but could not find him. My loss not being great, I gave it up and joined my friend who said: "I looked for those darkies to cut you out of the show." But I told him that they told me that I did not fight."

### A Close Shave.

(By W. Stone, Mass.)

One day when I was about twelve years old I and some other boys were playing ball in a pasture near the house. Another boy was shooting sparrows with a .22 rifle. I was so close that he did not see us. I was not at a sparrow and the bullet glanced, and it passed me by about an inch. I was never so scared in my life.

 \$1 worth of Tricks & Make-ups, sent postpaid for 25 cent stamps or 50 cent stamps. A nice Moustache or Full Beard, Irish or Side Whiskers, any color, bottle Spirit Gum to stick them on. Box of Burnt Cork to blacken up. Im. Rubber Mouth, big teeth, secret apparatus for performing the great vanishing half-dollar trick. This big offer is to get your address to send my large list. ear of plays, wigs, tricks & acts. latest novelties. Mention paper you saw this in and I will also put in a Heavy GOLD plate finger Ring FREE, send size. Address Chas. Marshall, Mfr., Lockport, N.Y.

## SEVEN COMPLETE FISHING TACKLE ASSORTMENTS GIVEN AWAY AS PRIZES

*Look on the Back Cover of No. 52 to  
See What They Are Like.*

**I**F YOU WIN ONE of these famous fishing tackle assortments you will have everything you could possibly need in the way of fishing tackle. You will have such a complete assortment that you will be able to **MAKE MONEY** retailing hooks, lines and sinkers to your comrades who have not been fortunate enough to win prizes. You may become a dealer in fishing tackle if you win one of these prizes, for you will have a complete assortment of over

**NINE HUNDRED HOOKS of All Kinds,**

**ONE HUNDRED LINES, Besides . . .**

**SINKERS and TROLLING HOOKS. . .**

### HOW TO WIN A PRIZE.

This new Prize Anecdote Contest is on the lines of the one which has just closed—one of the most successful contests ever inaugurated. Every boy in the country has had some **THRILLING ADVENTURES**. You have had one yourself—perhaps you were held up by robbers, or were nearly run over by a train; perhaps it was a close shave in a burning building, in scaling a precipice, in bear-hunting, or swimming; whatever it was, **WRITE IT UP**. Do it in less than 500 words, and mail it to us with the accompanying coupon.

All entries must be in before September 1. The contest closes on that date.

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